

**DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES  
FAMILIES FIRST SERVICES  
CONTRACTOR POLICY AND PROCEDURES MANUAL  
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**DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES  
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**INTRODUCTION**

The Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 dramatically changed welfare in this country and its implementation at the state or local level. The Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) program was replaced by Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) block grants to states. These grants gave states vast new discretion in how to spend funds on behalf of needy families. The TANF Program in Tennessee is known as **Families First** and was implemented based on a waiver submitted prior to the enactment of the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA). As required by the Families First Act of 1996, the Tennessee Department of Human Services is charged by Federal Waiver Authority with the administration of Families First as an 1115 Demonstration of the Social Security Act, Titles IV-A, IV-D, and IV-F. The waiver authority is for a period of 11 years, ending in July 2007.

For welfare reform to succeed in Tennessee, a thorough understanding of Families First is necessary for both the Department of Human Services (DHS) and contract agency staff. Contract staff and all providers must understand the concepts of this Manual and basic Families First policy and procedures that relate to their role in the total service delivery system for the client. DHS staff must also understand the service delivery system to be able to counsel and advise the participant in the development and modifications of the Personal Responsibility Plan.

**Program Goals of TANF**

- End the dependence of needy parents on government benefits by promoting job preparation, work, and marriage.
- Encourage the formation and maintenance of two-parent families.
- Reduce the number of out-of-wedlock births.
- Provide assistance to needy families so that children may be cared for in their own homes or in the homes of relatives.

**Program Goals of Families First**

- Strengthen families by establishing firm, but fair, expectations of parents for work, responsible parenting, and supporting their children.
- Build a better workforce by requiring work, offering education and training opportunities, and providing case management for families.
- Reduce poverty through work requirements, carefully planned benefit packages and transitional services.

At the implementation of the Families First program, the decision was made to contract services for component activities. In previous years, the Department also contracted for staff positions. FY '05 marks a point in which the Department contracts for services in which it does not possess the experience or expertise to provide. This requires DHS to enter into contractual relationships with other state departments and public service agencies. DHS has several core service contractors. These contractors may then sub-contract some specialized services to other agencies.



It is important for a contractor that they have an understanding of:

- The exact service DHS has purchased from them and how that service ties into the overall objective of self-sufficiency.
- The different roles of DHS staff or other contractual staff and the work assignments made at the state, district, and local levels so that the grant contractor is familiar with whom to contact for information and assistance.
- The terminology used at DHS and how that intersects with the contractor's terminology.
- The differing populations and unique demographics of the counties throughout the state and how to best serve the low-income portion of this population in their local economy.
- The importance of performance goals, expectations, and outcomes.
- The services offered to our participants must correlate to the employers' needs in order for self-sufficiency to be a viable goal.

### The Personal Responsibility Plan (PRP)

Receipt of Families First cash assistance requires all adults and minor caretakers to sign a Personal Responsibility Plan (PRP). The PRP requires participants to meet certain requirements which include having all school age children enrolled in school, keeping the immunizations and health checks current for children in the assistance group, and cooperating with child support services in obtaining support from the absent parent. Also, those who are not exempt or do not have a reason for interruption and who are included in the assistance group must participate in work and/or work preparation activities. These work and/or work preparation activities are referred to as work components. Each participant must meet certain work component attendance and participation rules to be considered in compliance with his/her PRP. They must also cooperate in providing information that verifies attendance and compliance with the PRP.

Most participants (there are exceptions) are required to fulfill a 40-hour work plan. Most PRPs will require that one of the components be a work-related activity. Work-related activities are indicated with an asterisk below. Listed here are most of the components available to participants:

- Training Activities
  - Work Prep
    - PACE (Parenting and Consumer Education)
    - Grant contractor developed programs
  - Job Skills Training
    - Post-secondary education (PELL eligible)
    - Certification/degree programs (non-PELL eligible)
    - On-the-job training
- Literacy testing
- Adult Education (including English as a Second Language)
- Employment Career Services\*
- Community Service Programs\*
- Employment\*
- Family Services Counseling
- Vocational Rehabilitation
- Department of Children's Services Parenting Plan
- Court Ordered Hours
- Work Experience\*

\* *These are work-related activities.*

### The PRP Process

Following eligibility determination for Families First, clients must have an Orientation to Families First. Orientation is a pre-plan discussion that covers topics that must be addressed with each participant prior to the development of a PRP (*details on Orientation can be found in that chapter in this Manual*). By signing the PRP, the Families First participant enters the Personal Responsibility Plan commitment which includes 40 hours of work and/or work preparation activities (with some exceptions). The DHS Caseworker must accommodate the participant's wishes regarding PRP activities as long as they are within the parameters of Families First policy. The DHS Caseworker discusses fully with the participant all of the available activities, what they encompass and how they fit into the participant's long range plan. **The Personal Responsibility Plan can only be**

**renegotiated when the participant has completed the activities that are in his/her current plan,** except in special situations as detailed in the Work Requirements and Work Components Chapter located in the Families First Policy Handbook. The PRP must be *signed* at each required semi-annual review of the case, but it may only be *renegotiated* when the current work activities end.

## **Knowledge, Skills, and Attitudes (KSAs)**

Each component offered in Families First must address the Knowledge, Skills, and Attitudes (KSAs) identified by Tennessee employers as being important for entry-level jobs and for job promotion. The KSA's were developed as a result of over 3000 Tennessee employers participating in a statewide survey that identified the most important characteristics employers desire in a new employee. Most employers want to hire trainable people and identified these traits as very important:

- Dependability;
- Ability to follow instructions;
- Getting along well with others;
- Doing the right thing—work ethics—honesty;
- Accurately performing work operations;
- Working on a team effectively;
- Cooperating with others;
- Listening for understanding;
- Talking respectfully;
- Following standard procedures;
- Having a GED/High School diploma;
- Quality;
- Accepting of change;
- Taking the initiative.

## **Support Services**

Support Services funds are available to assist Families First participants in the elimination of barriers to program participation and to self-sufficiency. The elimination of barriers requires frequent assessment of the participant's status by Caseworkers and other service providers. Examples of support services are:

- Transportation assistance
- Limited vehicle repairs
- Vehicle related expenses
- Dental assistance
- Optical assistance
- Other specific support services

Childcare assistance is also available to be used by participants to attend required activities associated with their PRP requirements. Childcare assistance is covered in the Families First Policy Handbook.

## The Importance of Time Limits Policy to Families First

Families First assistance groups have eligibility and grant payment time limit. A time limit is a range of months in which a participant will work to achieve self-sufficiency. There is an 18-month time limit and a 60-month time limit. There can be exemptions, interruptions, and extensions of these time limits (*these policy rules can be found in the Families First Policy Handbook which is available at all DHS offices*). The time limit provision is a critical and integral part of Families First law and policy. The client needs to make wise choices to ensure that they progress toward self-sufficiency as expeditiously as possible, keeping in mind the reality of time limits. It is because of the importance of a participant's time limit that the PRP can be renegotiated only when the participant completes an activity. Grant contractors and contract staff must remember that **timely action on the part of all staff can be a determining factor in whether or not a month is counted toward the participant's time count**. When an individual reports a change that would necessitate a renegotiation of the PRP, the Caseworker has two weeks (14 calendar days) to complete the renegotiation. Grant contractors have a responsibility to report any change affecting a client's case within three (3) days.

**If a component cannot be entered within two weeks from the date of the PRP or if needed support services cannot be arranged within two weeks, the participant's clock must be stopped. This would be due to the fault of DHS or the Contractor and is coded as such statistically.**

## Steps to Encourage Personal Success (STEPS)

The STEPS Program was designed to assist our participants in reaching their self-sufficiency goals prior to the 60<sup>th</sup> month of eligibility in their lifetime time limit. The STEPS Program instituted more intensive case management procedures beginning with the 54<sup>th</sup> month of the lifetime count. These procedures apply only to participants who are not currently exempt or interrupted from the time limits. As a part of this program, a staffing of the case is required at 54 months. Contract staff attend this staffing along with the DHS Caseworker, the Employment Career Specialist, the DHS Field Supervisor, and the client. At the staffing, the remaining months on the client's time limit are discussed, and any appropriate and needed changes are made to the client's PRP.

Details of the process can be found in the Work Requirements and Work Components chapter of the Families First Handbook.

## Families First Grant Payments

Families First cash payments are made through Tennessee's Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) system to the caretaker, alternate payee, or protective payee. Eligible participants' benefits are put into a cash account. To get cash, the participant can use a card at an Automated Teller Machine or at the retailer's Point of Sale machine. The payment is made available on the first of the month for continuously eligible cases. Payments are made from the date the signed application is received in the local office for all those determined to be eligible. Auxiliary payments are issued to those underpaid.

## **DHS/CONTRACTOR COLLABORATION**

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The Department of Human Services contracts with other public and not-for-profit agencies to form an effective team of experts to deliver the Families First program. DHS purchases core services from what DHS refers to as “core service providers”. This term is inclusive of single agencies and multiple agencies that form a consortium through sub-contractors. These core services include:

- Work Prep
- Employment Career Services;
- Job-Skill Training.

Single agencies and agency consortiums provide these services across the state. Agencies that are not capable of providing all core services may partner with other agencies. When core service agencies choose to sub-contract services, the core service provider has the responsibility to ensure that these services are delivered appropriately and that outcomes are achieved.

### **Contract Employees located in DHS Offices**

The information contained in this section should be used to further promote an environment where DHS employees and contract staff can work together effectively and provide optimal access to services for our program participants.

General Instructions – DHS supervisors may give the employees of the contractor day-to-day instructions regarding the county office operations.

Work Location – Whenever possible, the local offices will try to accommodate the collocation of contract staff to improve access to services for Families First clients. Since collocation is encouraged, collaboration between the Area Managers and the contractor will be necessary to determine if space is available.

Work Schedule If the work of the contract employee requires that the employee work outside the normal business hours of the DHS office, special accommodations should be discussed with the DHS Area Manager. The Area Manager will work with staff to accommodate this need.

Tools or Equipment – Contract staff collocated in DHS offices may be allowed to use computers, other tools and equipment provided in the county offices if available. Any tools or equipment not provided by DHS should be requested of the supervisor as the employer of record. General office supplies will not be provided by DHS.

Hiring, Performance Evaluations, and Terminating – It is the decision of the employer of record to select and hire the individuals to fill contract positions. DHS staff will consult with the employer of record should it be noted that collocated staff are engaging in behavior that is deemed inappropriate or disruptive. Any action necessary to correct behavior will be at the sole discretion of the grant contractor. The Department reserves the right to prohibit the hiring of individuals who have been convicted of fraud, sexual harassment, or any other type of situation that could put the Department or it's clients in harm's way.

It is the responsibility of the employer of record to prepare, conduct, and approve all employee performance evaluations. The employer may consult with DHS staff to receive input but must always conduct and approve the performance evaluation.

Training- DHS will train all new contract staff in Families First policies, procedures, and concepts. In addition to the initial training, contract staff may be expected to attend refresher Families First policy and training along with DHS Caseworkers. Their attendance will be specified at the time the training is announced. Occasionally travel will be necessary for attending training sessions. Specialized training such as professional development training and training necessary for the contract staff to complete their jobs will be the responsibility of the grant contractor.

Parenting and Consumer Education (PACE) facilitators are to be trained and certified by DHS Training staff. PACE Induction Training for new hires will be offered twice annually. Employees hired between training classes will receive instruction from a peer PACE trainer. PACE facilitators will receive certification after qualifications are met. Details of the certification process are located in the PACE chapter.

Employment Career Specialists are also required to complete Career Development Facilitator (CDF) training and meet the requirements for CDF certification. This requirement is later explained in detail in the ECS section of this Manual.

Funding for Core Services Staff (Personnel) DHS funds contract positions based on “unit” costs as opposed to full time equivalents (FTE). The Department expects the grant contractor to cover all personnel related costs from the budgeted unit costs. These costs include but are not limited to supplies, equipment, travel, etc.

Profit/Revenue Any profit or revenue generated from this grant must be used to offset the operational costs of the Families First program delivered by the contractor.

Written Contracts – For individuals providing services to contract agencies that are not their direct employees (i.e. auditors, CPAs), a separate sub-contract agreement is required.

## **Families First Core Services Representative**

Each core service provider must designate one staff member to be a Families First representative. This may be a Families First Core Services Supervisor. The primary responsibility of this employee is to serve as the liaison between his/her contract agency and the DHS state and district offices regarding the day-to-day delivery of Families First services. This individual is not to be confused with the person designated by the grant contractor as the administrative or business contract contact person. However, this individual could be one in the same for smaller agencies. The employee may be asked to assume responsibility for submission of various reports and to attend regular meetings with the DHS State Office Services Unit and/or the DHS District Offices as needed. It is recommended that individuals who are selected as Families First Core Services Representatives have excellent organizational skills, possess the qualities necessary to receive and deliver information concerning the Families First program and have a thorough understanding of Families First policy and the program’s participants. Typically, this person is capable of assuming the function/responsibilities of the staff they supervise.

The Families First Core Services Representative will provide ongoing oversight of the Employment Career Specialists and the facilitation of the contractor's Work Prep activities. The Families First Core Services Representative will at a minimum:

1. Serve as the primary contact for the Families First Services Unit and the DHS county and district office staff;
2. Have the goals and objectives of the Families First program as a top priority in job responsibilities;
3. Have a sound knowledge of Families First policy and procedures;
4. Manage the working alliance between DHS staff and the contract staff;
5. Develop a written Job Plan and conduct periodic performance evaluations of contract employees with input from DHS staff;
6. Report statistical information as needed;
7. Schedule regular conferences with the DHS county office Area Manager and Field Supervisor(s);
8. Attend regular meetings with the Families First Services Unit and the DHS district office (if required) and promptly disseminate pertinent information to appropriate contract agency staff;
9. Conduct case reviews of the ECS files on a regular bases to ensure the highest quality of service to the FF client;
10. Working with DHS management staff, guide ECS staff in developing proactive approaches to increasing job placements;
11. Assist ECS staff and DHS management staff in contacting potential employers of Families First participants, accompanying them on site visits if necessary;
12. Ensure that file reviews and ongoing program review is completed to ensure compliance with DHS policy and procedure.
13. Working with DHS management staff, ensure that Families First referrals are distributed equitably to ECS staff;
14. Working with DHS management staff, ensure vacant caseloads are covered, required activities are available with timely access upon receipt of a referral;
15. Working with DHS management staff, ensure appropriate staff attend DHS meetings, trainings, workshops and conferences;
16. Coordinate the placement, location, and work assignments of all personnel with the DHS District Administrator and Area Manager.

Agencies may require employees who work fulltime on Families First to function in dual-rolepositions in which they are cross-trained for more than one job (e.g. ECS and Work Prep facilitation).

## **CODE OF ETHICS AND STANDARDS OF CONDUCT**

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Ethical behavior in an organization is acting responsibly, competently, honestly, fairly, and courageously in behalf of the organization's long-term best interest, including those of fellow employees, clients, and contractors. As government employees, we have a special obligation also to act in the public's best interest at all times. Contract employees are expected to read and sign the Tennessee Department of Human Services Code of Ethics and Standards of Conduct available in *Appendix J* to this Manual. By signing this document, the contracting employee agrees to adhere to the ethics and standards detailed in the agreement. A signed copy of this document should be maintained in the employee's personnel record.



## ACCESS TO COMPUTER SYSTEMS

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### Access to Systems

The assignment of a User Identification code (User ID) is the first step in obtaining access to computer resources. The User ID may also be called the RACF User ID, RACF #, DE#, or DEC#. Access for contract staff is initiated by the DHS Area Manager who completes a User ID Application/Access Authorization Form HS-2730. Section B2 is designated for FA Families First Contract Staff Authorized Resources. Once the form is completed, it must be sent to the External Agency Resource Manager in the DHS state office for approval.

Requests for equipment of contract staff employees to be set up for operation should be made by the DHS Area Manager to DHS Systems Staff. This request should include information concerning the physical location of the contract employee.

Employment Career Specialists will have access to view ACCENT screens but **will not** have the ability to update data on ACCENT. The use of the ACCENT screens will be restricted to allow inquiry only to those screens necessary for the employee to do his/her job.

All contract staff using the Department of Human Services' computer system must maintain all information as confidential. The data available is to be used for authorized business purposes only. Each employee is responsible for any transaction which occurs as a result of the use of their USER ID code. **Passwords are to be kept confidential and shared with no one.** Electronic mail and the Internet are not to be used for private purposes. Each employee is asked to sign and adhere to an agreement covering these and other issues when hired and again in one year. Please refer to *Appendix G* for further information and the appropriate forms.

The DHS Area Manager should be notified immediately upon an employee's termination, and the USER ID code for that individual should not be reassigned to another employee without completing the necessary paperwork.

### Purchasing Equipment

Any purchase of equipment must be preceded by a written request submitted to the DHS State office. This request should be made to the attention of the Director of Families First Services. The request should detail a description of the equipment and a justification of need. All grant contractors that are anticipating a purchase should first contact the Director of Families First Services to obtain the most recent equipment specifications.

Equipment purchased through the Families First grant will be inventoried, tagged, maintained and supported by the Office of Information Systems Technology.

## CIVIL RIGHTS AND FAMILIES FIRST

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The Department of Human Services works with agencies and contractors in every part of the community in an effort to help our Food Stamps, Families First and Medicaid/TennCare clients become as independent as possible. With some changes in regulations as well as the expanded role of Families First, our responsibilities for being aware of and responsive to the civil rights laws that ensure equal and fair treatment for our participants have increased. These responsibilities permeate every aspect of the Families First program, the Food Stamp program, the Medicaid/TennCare program, and those related programs that provide services to our participants.

### **Federal Nondiscrimination Laws that Apply to Family Assistance Programs**

Federal laws that prohibit discrimination in federally funded programs apply to the three Family Assistance Programs (Food Stamps, Families First and Medicaid/TennCare) and the actions of our contractors and service providers, just as they do to other federally funded programs and their providers. An overview of the federal laws that prohibit discrimination in any federally funded program, including our Family Assistance programs is listed below.

- **Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964** – prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, or national origin in any program or activity that receives federal funds or other federal financial assistance
- **Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964** – prohibits private, state, and local government employers with 15 or more employees, and employment agencies from discriminating on the basis of race, color, sex (including pregnancy), religion or national origin in all aspects of an employment relationship. This includes hiring, discharge, compensation, assignments, and other terms, conditions, and privileges of employment.
- **Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973** – prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability by employers and organizations that receive federal financial assistance.
- **The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA)** – prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability by both public and private entities, whether or not they receive federal financial assistance.
- **The Age Discrimination Act of 1975 (ADEA)** – prohibits discrimination on the basis of age in programs or activities receiving federal financial assistance.
- **Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972** – prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex in educational programs and activities that receive or benefit from federal financial assistance.
- **The Equal Pay Act (EPA)** – requires payment of equal wages to men and women performing substantially the same work unless the pay discrepancy is based on a seniority or merit system (a system that measures quantity or quality of production, or a factor other than sex). The EPA applies to employers of any size.

## Coverage by Federal Nondiscrimination Laws

- The **nondiscrimination statutes** listed above prohibit discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, and handicap/disability in programs or activities that receive or benefit from federal financial assistance. These same statutes prohibit discrimination on the basis of sex in education and training programs that receive federal assistance. Discrimination on the basis of handicap/disability is prohibited in all programs, services, or activities of public entities. ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) coverage does not depend on the receipt of federal funds.
- The **employment discrimination statutes** prohibit discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, citizenship status and unfair documentary practices regarding employment verification, sex, age, and disability in private and public sector employment. Depending on the circumstances, the Department may be subject to coverage under both the nondiscrimination statutes and the employment discrimination statutes.

These laws apply to:

- state agencies that receive federal money through a block grant to conduct public assistance programs;
- county and city agencies that assist in job training as part of a public assistance program;
- private contractors and service providers that help applicants/recipients find jobs or training;
- county offices that determine eligibility for food stamps;
- state agencies that refer applicants/recipients to businesses or public agencies for employment; and
- private contractors and businesses that contract with the state to provide job referral services for applicants/participants.

## Family Assistance Accommodation Requirements

DHS is required to provide reasonable accommodations to applicants/recipients to ensure that they have equal access to benefits and services. “*Reasonable accommodation*” includes, but is not limited to:

- modifying existing facilities to make them accessible;
- acquiring or modifying equipment;
- providing readers or sign language interpreters; and/or
- offering modified work plans for Families First AGs.

Accommodations are designed and granted on a case-by-case basis to ensure that an individual's special needs are addressed to guarantee full access to Family Assistance Programs.

At each client contact, the DHS staff member should make sure that the client has all of the information and assistance from the Department that is needed to complete the application, interview or other client action before ending the conversation. If an accommodation is requested but staff is not sure whether the request can/should be fulfilled, the Area Manager and/or FS1 must be informed and must make the final decision.

Accommodations should be offered when:

- The client requests accommodations based on a disability or impairment that will prevent them from accessing our services;

- The DHS staffer (counselor, front desk staff, contractor, etc.) is concerned that the client may not understand the application, verification or recertification instructions (e.g., a TennCare client who is flagged as Severely and Persistently Mentally Ill (SPMI));
- The DHS staffer (counselor, front desk staff, contractor, etc.) is concerned that the client may not complete the application, or recertification interview without these accommodations;
- The program's policies dictate that a waiver from the office interview is appropriate; or if
- Other circumstances or information lead DHS staff to think that these accommodations are needed.

## **Department of Human Services County Office Procedures**

**The DHS Area Manager for each county office must have procedures in place to ensure that all front desk staff and other staff who directly serve clients, including contract staff, know how to arrange for accommodations and know who must be consulted in order to arrange these accommodations.** Each staff member should have a copy of these procedures for quick reference. While there may be some accommodation situations that come up more often, all Family Assistance staff and contract staff must understand that accommodations may need to be newly created to address case specific situations.

The DHS county procedures must include the local resources available to assist with required accommodations. Local resources must include but are not limited to:

A list of the local and area locations that may assist with alternate site interviews (e.g., Community Mental Health Centers (CMHC), local housing development, etc.).

- This must include the contact name and telephone number in order to make arrangements to use the site.
- Instructions and access codes for use of the over-the-phone translation services.
- List and contact information for all community language experts willing to be a paid or volunteer interpreter. This should include sign language interpreters.
- Procedures for arranging staff transportation and reimbursement (if applicable) for those making home visits or interviews at an alternate location.
- Contact information for the local vocational rehabilitation services and information on what type of accommodations VR may or may have already identified.
- Each local Vocational Rehabilitation office has agreed to use their Braille services to assist in accommodating clients that need documents in Braille. Please make those documents which are reasonable and needed to ensure access to all programs are available in Braille.
- Schedule and contact information for the co-located Family Services Counseling staff.
- The telephone number and access information for the Mobile Crisis Team that provides services to that area.
- Other local resources that have been arranged in order to ensure the maximum accommodations from our agency in the fastest time possible.

Statewide Resources available that should be included in the county-specific information:

- TTY line – There is a statewide TTY number for hearing impaired clients who need help accessing our services. The number for the DHS Tennessee Council for the Hearing Impaired is 1-800-270-1349 or, in Davidson County, 313-4913. This is a TTY message service that is checked throughout each business day. This hotline will ensure that messages

from Family Assistance applicants/recipients or interested parties get through to our agency to make needed services accessible.

- Telephone language interpreter services – This service offers:
  - Three-way interpreter services, via telephone;
  - “I Speak” cards to help staff identify the language spoken by a client who is in our office; and
  - Pronunciation guides to help staff identify the language spoken by a client who is on the phone, which will help us keep the client on the line while connecting with the language line operator.
  - A listing and copies of DHS translated documents and forms that are available in languages other than English.

## **Title VI Prohibition of National Origin Discrimination As It Affects Persons With Limited English Proficiency (LEP)**

In order to ensure compliance with Title VI, DHS must take steps to ensure that LEP persons who apply for or receive Families First for themselves and/or their families have meaningful access to those programs. The most important step in meeting this obligation is to provide the language assistance necessary to ensure such access, at no cost to the LEP person.

- The key to providing meaningful access for LEP persons is to ensure that the Department and the LEP person can communicate effectively. The steps taken must ensure that the LEP person:
  - is given adequate information;
  - is able to understand the services and benefits available;
  - is able to receive those benefits and services for which he/she is eligible; and
  - is able to effectively communicate the relevant circumstances of his/her situation to the Department.
- In order to ensure that persons are not excluded from equal program participation due to (LEP), the Department must provide trained and competent interpreters and other oral language assistance services. We may:
  - hire bilingual staff;
  - hire staff interpreters;
  - use volunteer staff interpreters;
  - use volunteer community interpreters;
  - contract with an outside interpreter service; or
  - use an over-the-phone translation service.

### ***Accommodations Procedures for LEP Clients***

For LEP clients, interpreter services must be offered free of charge to the client, including:

- Over-the-phone translators
- Community interpreters

All staff with client contact should be well versed and able to access these language services.

Friends and family members may be used as interpreters at the request of the LEP client provided the use of such a person would not compromise the effectiveness of the services, violate confidentiality, and the client is first advised that a free interpreter is available. The LEP client's declination of the offer of free interpreter services must be documented. Also *suggest* that a trained interpreter (in addition to the friend/family member) sit in during the interview to ensure reliable and correct interpretation of information. Minor children cannot be used as interpreters.

### ***Limited English Proficiency (LEP)***

Contract agencies must take steps to ensure that LEP persons who are eligible for their programs or services have meaningful access to the health and social service benefits that they provide. The most important step in meeting this obligation is for recipients of Federal financial assistance, such as, grants, contractors, and subcontracts to provide the language assistance necessary to ensure such access, at no cost to the LEP person.

The type of language assistance a contract agency provides to ensure meaningful access will depend on a variety of factors, including the size of the agency, the size of the eligible LEP population it serves, the nature of the program or service, the objectives of the program, the total resources available to the agency, the frequency with which particular languages are encountered, and the frequency with which LEP persons come into contact with the agency.

The steps taken by the agency must ensure that the LEP person is given adequate information, is able to understand the services and benefits available, and is able to receive those for which he/she is eligible. The agency must also ensure that the LEP person can effectively communicate his/her circumstances to the agency.

### ***Oral Language Interpretation***

The contract agency must develop procedures for obtaining and providing trained and competent interpreters and other oral language assistance services in a timely manner. This might include hiring bilingual staff, hiring interpreters, contracting with outside interpreter services, arranging for volunteer interpreters, or arranging the use of telephone language interpreter services.

### ***Interpreters***

A contract agency may expose itself to liability under Title VI if it requires, suggests, or encourages an LEP person to use friends, minor children, or family members as interpreters, as this could compromise the effectiveness of the service. Use of such persons could result in a breach of confidentiality or reluctance on the part of individuals to reveal personal information critical to their situations.

If an agency informs a LEP person of the right to free interpreter services, the person declines the services and requests the use of a family member or friend, the agency should document the offer and declination in the person's file. Even when the LEP person chooses to use a family member or friend, the agency should suggest that an interpreter sit in on the interview to ensure accurate interpretation.

Agencies must ensure that they use persons who are competent to provide interpreter services. Competency requires more than self-identification as bilingual. Interpreters should be able to demonstrate proficiency in both English and the other languages, have had training that includes the ethics of interpreting, have fundamental knowledge of specialized terms in both languages, and be sensitive to the participant's culture.

### ***Translation of Written Materials***

The agency should provide translated written materials, including vital documents, for each eligible LEP language group that constitutes 10% or 3,000, whichever is less, of the population of persons eligible to be served or likely to be directly affected by the agency. If LEP language groups do not meet that criteria, but constitute 5% or 1,000, whichever is less, of the population of persons to be served, the agency must ensure that vital documents are translated into the appropriate language. Translation of other documents can be provided orally. If the LEP language group does not meet either criteria and has few than 100 persons in the population to be served, the agency does not translate written materials but provides written notice in the primary language of the LEP language group of the right to receive competent oral translation of written materials.

### ***Methods of Providing Notice to LEP Persons***

- Use of language identification cards which allow LEP persons to identify needs to the staff and for staff to identify the language needs of participants: To be effective, the cards must invite the LEP person to identify the language he/she speaks. This identification must be recorded in the participant's file. Copies of "I Speak" cards can be obtained from the local DHS office.
- Posting and maintaining signs in regularly encountered languages other than English in waiting rooms, reception areas, and other point of entry: These signs must inform the participants of their right to free language assistance services and invite them to identify themselves as persons needing such services.
- Translation of application forms and instructional information or other written materials into appropriate non-English languages by competent translators: For LEP persons whose language does not exist in written form, assistance from an interpreter will be needed to explain the documents.
- Uniform procedures for timely and effective communication between staff and LEP persons: This must include instructions for English-speaking employees to obtain assistance from interpreters or bilingual staff when receiving calls from or initiating calls to LEP persons.
- Inclusion of statements about the services available and the right to free language assistance services, in appropriate non-English languages, in brochures, booklets, outreach and recruitment information and other materials that are routinely disseminated to the public.

## **Title VI Prohibition on Discriminatory Conduct in Federally Funded Programs and Activities**

DHS may not discriminate against people on the basis of race, color, national origin, handicap/disability, or age in how we administer our programs or activities.

DHS may not indirectly discriminate on these bases through contractors or by means of any other arrangement. The Department is responsible for ensuring that our contractors administer their programs in a nondiscriminatory manner. ***Public entities and private contractors that contract with***

*the state to administer welfare programs are subject to the nondiscrimination statutes because they act as agents of DHS in carrying out the program or activity, not because they are recipients of federal assistance.*

- DHS **may not exclude or deny benefits** to persons based on their race, color, national origin, handicap/disability, or age, or on the basis of sex in education programs.

***Examples:***

- DHS Caseworkers may not reject an applicant for benefits because of race or ethnicity. If an applicant declares that he or she is a U. S. citizen, no further verification is required unless we have reason to question this statement.
  - DHS Caseworkers may not reject an application based on the assumption that a person with a foreign-sounding last name is not a citizen and therefore not eligible.
  - DHS Caseworkers may not deny benefits to persons who are not fluent in English because they assume persons who are, or appear to be, from other countries and are not English proficient, are not eligible for such benefits.
  - A Caseworker or DHS contractor may not exclude a female Families First recipient from a plumbing apprenticeship training because he/she thinks that plumbing is not an appropriate occupation for a female.
- DHS may not impose different standards or procedures to determine who may receive benefits on the basis of race, color, national origin, disability, or age, or on the basis of sex in education programs.

***Examples:***

- A DHS Caseworker may not accept a self-declaration of qualified immigration status requiring verification from applicants who appear to be of one national origin, yet require all applicants who appear to be of another national origin to submit INS documentation because of an assumption that these applicants are illegal aliens.
- For Families First applicants/recipients, DHS personnel may not report suspected illegal aliens to the INS on the basis of race, color, or national origin.
- A handicapped/disabled client cannot be forced to have a telephone interview because the Caseworker thinks they will have trouble getting to the county office. However, the offer of a telephone interview must be extended to this client if the worker thinks they will have trouble getting to the county office for a face-to-face interview.
- A Family Assistance staff member in the county office may not refer an LEP client to another county office because the staffer thinks the other county office is more accustomed to serving LEP clients.
- An employee of a contractor hired by the state may not delay a review of referrals from older individuals until after she evaluates referrals from younger persons nor may the employee give expedited review of the referrals for younger persons.



- DHS **may not provide different benefits** to persons on the basis of their race, color, national origin, disability, age, or on the basis of sex in education programs.

***Examples:***

- Do not reject applicants for job training programs because they are or appear to be Hispanic.
- Do not assume that a single mother with four children would be unable to complete a rigorous training course because of her family responsibilities.
- Do not assume that a pregnant woman is unable to complete a rigorous training course because of the expectation that she will not want to work after the child is born.
- A DHS office located in an area consisting of Hispanic immigrants with limited English proficiency must provide written materials or offer other communication services in both English and Spanish that describe all of the benefits and services offered to applicants and participants.

## **Discriminatory Conduct on the Basis of Handicap/Disability That Is Prohibited in Programs and Services**

- **DHS may not discriminate against any qualified individual with a disability in providing services or administering any program or activity, whether or not the program receives federal financial assistance.** In general, an individual with a disability is “qualified” if that person meets the essential eligibility requirements for receipt of services or participation in the program or activity. DHS may not refuse to allow a person with a disability to participate because the person has a disability. We must eliminate unnecessary eligibility standards or rules that deny an individual with a disability an equal opportunity to participate. DHS may not harass a program participant or applicant based on a disability.

***Examples:***

- A client has physical disabilities that make it almost impossible for him to come into the county office. The DHS office may not refuse to serve him because he is unable to be interviewed in the county office.
  - Families First recipients with disabilities may not be prohibited from work activities, education, or training opportunities based on assumptions that such individuals are not qualified to participate in training or work.
  - A community college offering job-training for Families First participants may not require students with disabilities to provide medical histories if such histories are not required of all students.
- DHS is required to make reasonable modifications in policies, practices, and procedures that deny equal access to individuals with disabilities, unless a fundamental alteration in the program would result.

***Examples:***

- A job-training course for Families First participants must extend testing time when a person with a learning disability requests extra time to complete the test because of his/her disability. The course provider may ask the individual who is seeking extra time to provide reasonable documentation of the learning disability and the additional time that is required.
- If an individual with a disability, with or without reasonable accommodation, is unable to perform the essential functions of any available job, DHS should seek alternatives to the work participation requirement.
- DHS must ensure that programs and services are provided in an integrated setting, unless separate or different measures are necessary to ensure equal opportunity for individuals with disabilities. Programs that provide special benefits to people with disabilities are permitted, but people with disabilities cannot be compelled to participate in those programs.

***Examples:***

- A county vocational training program may offer special training opportunities for people with vision impairments. However, it may not require people with impairments to participate in the special program or refuse to permit them to participate in courses open to other program participants.
- A county DHS office may offer an alternate site for an eligibility interview at the Community Mental Health Center (CMHC) for those with mental disabilities. However, the office may not require people with mental disabilities to go to the CMHC for an eligibility interview.
- A county DHS office may not require people with HIV to be served in a separate room from other participants.
- DHS must ensure effective communication with individuals who have hearing, speech, or vision impairments. Programs must provide auxiliary aids and services when necessary to ensure effective communication. However, they are not required to provide auxiliary aids that will result in undue financial and administrative burdens. Examples of auxiliary aids include but are not limited to: sign language interpreters, readers, and text telephones (TTYs)

***Examples:***

- A job placement program that makes information about job openings available by telephone must ensure that the information is available to users of TTYs.
- Printed information for applicants/participants about welfare eligibility requirements must also be provided on audiotape for people who have vision impairments, or materials must be read to them.
- DHS must provide sign language interpreters for applicants/clients when it is necessary to ensure effective communication for hearing-impaired individuals.

- DHS may not exclude individuals with disabilities from programs and activities because buildings are inaccessible. However, the providers are not required to take any action that would result in a fundamental alteration in the nature of the program or activity, or in undue financial and administrative burdens. This means that providers need not remove physical barriers such as stairs in existing buildings as long as the programs are made accessible to individuals with disabilities in other locations or through other methods such as home visits.

***Examples:***

- A DHS office that is located on the second floor of a building that has no elevator may make its services available to an applicant who uses a wheelchair by meeting with that applicant in an accessible ground floor office.
- A job-training program that usually offers classes in an inaccessible second-floor classroom may make its program accessible by relocating the class to an accessible classroom in another building.
- An applicant with a physical disability who cannot be accommodated at the county office must be offered an alternative to the office interview that will accommodate his/her needs and, at the same time, satisfy program requirements.

***Accommodations Procedures for Handicapped/Disabled Clients***

- Waiver of Office Interview for applicants/recipients:
  - If the client has named an authorized representative for the household/AG, the authorized representative can come to the office in lieu of the household/AG. (For Families First, an authorized representative can now be used for basic eligibility questions needed for eligibility determination but may not negotiate a PRP or provide other selected information, e.g. child support cooperation);
  - The office interview **must** be waived upon request by any household/AG which is:
    1. Unable to appoint an authorized representative and which has no household/AG members able to come into the county office because they are 60 years of age or older, or are handicapped/disabled;
    2. Unable to appoint an authorized representative and lives in an extremely remote location;
    3. Unable to appoint an authorized representative and has no household/AG members able to come to the county office because of transportation difficulties or similar hardships which the county determines, on a case-by-case basis, warrants a waiver of the office interview. These hardship conditions include, but are not limited to:
      - a) Illness;
      - b) Care of a household member;
      - c) Prolonged severe weather;
      - d) Hardship associated with living in a rural area; and/or

- e) Employment or training hours that prevent an applicant from participating in a face-to-face interview. (note: if needed, the county office should try to accommodate this client by providing appointments outside of traditional business hours.)

The county must determine if the difficulty or hardship reported by a household/AG warrants a waiver of the office interview and document in the case file why a request for a waiver was granted or denied.

– Telephone interviews

The county may offer a telephone interview in lieu of a face-to-face interview for a household/AG for whom the face-to-face interview is waived.

Out-of-office interviews

We anticipate that the interview requirement for the majority of households/AGs with waived face-to-face interviews may be completed via telephone interviews. However, this may not be possible in some rare instances. When this is the case, a mutually agreed-upon site (e.g., Community Mental Health Center, the client's workplace, DHS satellite offices, community agencies, or other locations) for the interview will be arranged between the county and the applicant/recipient or his/her representative.

***Examples:***

- A telephone interview or an authorized representative interview should be offered when a client is hospitalized.
- A home visit should be offered to a homebound disabled client who is not able to be served through a telephone interview or authorized representative.
- If a handicapped/disabled client indicates that he/she needs a home visit because she is having transportation problems and will be unable to come for his/her appointment, the front desk secretary or worker with whom the client speaks may wish to consult with the DHS Area Manager to get additional guidance as to whether or not accommodation should be made. While the Area Manager should instruct the Family Assistance staff member to arrange for a telephone interview or provide a workable alternate form of transportation in order to accommodate the client, a home visit is not the mandated accommodation.
- If a client indicates that they have a child who is disabled and would therefore require accommodations in order to have the interview in the county office, the staffer should explore whether it is more reasonable to make the requested accommodations or to allow for a telephone interview, alternate site for the interview, or a home visit.

## Filing Discrimination Complaints

Any individual or his/her representative may file a discrimination complaint with the County, District, or State Office of the Department of Human Services, or with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services or U.S. Department of Agriculture. Complaints may also be filed with the Tennessee Human Rights Commission. A complaint may be filed at both the state and the federal levels, separately or concurrently, at any time during the process. The complaint may concern discriminatory practices or actions on the part of DHS. The complaint may also involve practices or actions by other agency related institutions, organizations, contractors, medical care vendors or practitioners that participate in any of the Family Assistance programs by providing aid, care, or services. DHS will investigate each complaint promptly to determine whether or not it is justified and, if justified, what corrective action is appropriate.

- A. Instruct the complainant to submit the complaint in writing, preferably on Form HS-2631, Complaint Under Civil Rights Act of 1964. The form may be filled out by the complainant, their representative, or a Title VI coordinator. A verbal complaint may be taken, but then must be written up on Form HS-2631. Unless a complaint is already being filed at the state or federal level, it is preferred that all complaints be first filed at the local level – within thirty (30) days of the alleged discriminatory act. Experience shows that complaints are more easily resolved at the point of origination.
- B. Record the complaint in the Title VI Complaint Log. List complainant identification and type/status of complaint.
- C. Send the original copy of the complaint to the department Title VI Coordinator in Nashville (include all pertinent documentation);. Give a copy of the complaint to the complainant and retain one for facility files. The local Title VI coordinator must notify the department Title VI Coordinator immediately when any complaint is filed.
- D. Mail a letter to the complainant acknowledging receipt of the complaint within five (5) calendar days of the date that complaint was received.
- E. Conduct fact-finding investigations within thirty (30) days of receipt of the complaint. The local Title VI coordinator is responsible for this initial investigation. When the complaint applies to discriminatory actions on the part of the contracting agencies, individuals, or institutions from which assistance or service is purchased or secured by the Department, the complainant will be interviewed to secure as much information as possible. The interview will examine the nature of the complaint, the precipitating circumstances, and identify the date the alleged act occurred.
- F. Report investigation findings to departmental management within five (5) days of completion of investigation. If the report includes a finding of violation of Title VI, the facility should include any proposed remedial action in the Report of Investigation, Form HS-2632. Within five (5) calendar days after the date of the appeal. The form will then be forwarded to the Tennessee Human Rights Commission (THRC) or the complainant may mail the form directly.

- Tennessee Human Rights Commission  
530 Church Street; Suite 400  
Nashville, TN 37243-0745  
Phone: (615) 741-5825

Complaints filed with the federal agencies should be sent to:

- U. S. Department of Health and Human Services  
Director, Office of Civil Rights  
Room 326-W, Whitten Building  
1400 Independence Avenue, S. W.  
Washington, D. C. 20250-9140  
Or call (202) 720-5964 (voice and TDD)

## **Public Notification of Nondiscrimination Compliance**

- The Civil Rights pamphlet will be given to each applicant/recipient at each application and review. The application form will contain information about rights and responsibilities.
- All Tennessee Department of Human Services offices will permanently display the nondiscrimination poster provided by USDA, Food and Nutrition Service.

The Department will ensure that applicants/recipients and other low-income families/individuals have access to information regarding nondiscrimination statutes and policies, complaint procedures, and the rights of participants within 10 days of the date of a request for such information.

## **Title VI Compliance**

All DHS contract staff must be provided with information on the appropriate civil rights provisions that must be recognized in the workplace. It is imperative that all staff understand the gravity of these laws. Families First participants must be treated equally and fairly with no inappropriate assumptions made regarding disability, race, gender, or age while leading our clients to self-sufficiency.

Compliance with Title VI (of the Civil Rights Act of 1964) is required of all programs operated by the Tennessee Department of Human Services and by all programs operated by agencies under contract to the Department. The intent of Title VI regulation is to ensure that all persons, regardless of their race, color or national origin, are allowed to participate in federally funded programs. When an agency has a board or committee which acts in an advisory or policy making capacity, the agency should take steps to ensure that minorities are notified of the existence of these groups and are provided equal opportunity to participate as members.

Each agency under contract with DHS must designate one individual as the Title VI Coordinator to be responsible for compliance with regulations at their agency. The name and address of this person should be forwarded to the Families First Services Unit. A list of duties may be found in *Appendix C*.

Each agency must also provide training on Title VI. To assist contract agencies in providing this training to staff, a training packet is available from the local DHS office. This training covers all the topics included in the chapter, “Civil Rights and Families First” located in this Manual. The Title VI training video, *Understanding and Abiding by Title VI of the Civil Rights Act*, is available from the local DHS Area Manager. All staff should receive Title VI training on an annual basis. All training should be documented and a training roster kept on file for monitoring purposes.

All contracts and grant agreements between DHS and contract agencies must contain language regarding the agency’s intent to comply with Title VI regulations. The agency should have in place internal monitoring procedures to ensure the agency’s continued compliance with the Title VI regulations. Contract agencies will continue to be monitored by Finance and Administration for compliance with all terms of their contracts with DHS including Title VI. DHS will also conduct routine compliance reviews of those contracts not scheduled for review by F&A.

Agencies under contract to DHS must notify the public about all available services and about their rights under Title VI. Notification methods may include the displaying of posters, distribution of brochures, and the inclusion of a nondiscrimination statement on agency publications.

All clients participating in a federally funded program under contract to DHS have the right to file a complaint and subsequent appeals in the event they feel that they have been discriminated against in the application for or the receipt of services. DHS has specific procedures in place to ensure that Title VI complaints are handled in accordance with the complaint guideline procedures as set forth by the Human Rights Commission of the State of Tennessee. A copy of these procedures is included in *Appendix C*.

Forms needed by contract agencies and clients to document compliance and to file complaints and appeals are included in Appendix C. Agency Title VI Coordinators should become familiar with each of these forms and inform clients and staff of their availability and use. It is the contract agency’s responsibility to comply with Title VI regulations and to submit required documentation in a timely manner.

*Appendix C* also contains copies of the Statue, Purpose, Limited English Proficiency (LEP) and Covered Entities. Finally, *Appendix C* contains a Recommended Contract Agency Compliance Plan for Title VI.

## **The Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA)**

The Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA), Public Law 104-191 was passed by Congress to reform the insurance market and simplify health care administrative processes. HIPAA also establishes federal rules to protect the privacy and security of protected health information. Title I improves the portability and continuity of health insurance for working Americans, and Title II provides for the simplification of health care administration processes. Title II affects DHS and many other state departments. The Privacy Rule, promulgated by the Department of Health and Human Services, is the first comprehensive federal regulation aimed at protecting the confidentiality of patients’ medical records and health information pursuant to HIPAA. HIPAA refers to “covered entities” which includes DHS along with several other state private entities. **Other impacted entities include any one who contracts with an affected agency (covered entity).** As a state agency covered by HIPAA that is related to the provision of medical assistance benefits to residents of our state, HIPAA has implications in the day-to-day operation of

the Department of Human Services, the Families First program, and contract agencies. Medical assistance is provided to all recipients of Families First cash payments and for eighteen months following case closure as Transitional Medicaid.

The Privacy Rule protects not only electronic and paper records, but oral communications as well. **Violations of this Rule may trigger monetary penalties and result in imprisonment.**

There are three (3) sections of Title II that affects DHS contract agencies:

- **Transaction and Codes Sets.** These are codes that are used to pass information between a health care provider and a health plan to obtain payment. These codes are also used to identify diagnoses and procedures performed by a health care provider. The purpose of transactions and code sets is to make transferring information simpler and more efficient by requiring everyone to use the same codes in the same format each time.
- **Privacy.** The Privacy Rule sets standards which govern the use and disclosure of private health information, gives patients new privacy rights regarding access to and use of their medical records, and imposes responsibilities on health care providers, health plans, researchers and others to protect the privacy of patients and inform patients of their rights. The Privacy Rule is very clear concerning those disclosures of a person's protected health information that DHS contract agencies are permitted to make without the person's authorization.
- **Security.** This rule addresses the ability to control access to protected health information and how this information can be protected from accidental or intentional disclosure to unauthorized individuals. Access to the building and/or case files contained therein by the public or unauthorized employees must be limited. The public should not be able to move freely throughout the building without the knowledge of security personnel or employees who are serving these individuals.

**Protected health information** includes individually identifiable health information, such as:

- Name
- Date of birth
- Address
- Social security number
- Fingerprint
- Photograph
- Name of relatives
- Employer
- Telephone numbers
- Medical record number
- Health plan number
- Enrollment status/program eligibility
- Certificate/license number

Any of the above items, when included with personal health information, are considered individually identifiable health information. The HIPAA Privacy Rules address who has access to protected health information and the rights of individuals to keep this information about themselves from being disclosed. This rule protects information that is written, spoken, or in electronic form.



## ***Minimum Necessary Standard***

DHS contract agencies have access to very private information about our clients. Only the minimum amount of information necessary to perform the job assigned should be accessed, and this information should only be discussed with others who “need to know” to do their jobs. The minimum amount of information necessary includes:

- Identifying members of the workforce who need access to confidential information;
- Identifying what information can be accessed; and
- Limiting access.

The minimum necessary requires a contract agency to evaluate its practices and to enhance safeguards as needed to limit unnecessary or inappropriate access to and disclosure of protected health information. The minimum necessary standard does not apply to the following:

- Disclosure to or requests by a health care provider for treatment purposes;
- Disclosure to the individual who is the subject of the information;
- Uses or disclosures made pursuant to an individual’s authorization;
- Uses and disclosures required for compliance with the HIPAA Administrative Simplification Rules;
- Disclosures to the Department of Health and Human Services when disclosure of information is required under the Privacy Rules for enforcement purposes; and
- Uses or disclosures that are required by law.

## ***Disclosing Information***

There are permitted reasons to disclose information. These are:

- To the individual;
- For treatment, payment, or health care operations:
  - Treatment is the provision, coordination, or management of health care for an individual by one or more health care providers, including consultation between providers regarding a patient and referral of a patient by one provider to another.
  - Payment covers the activities of a health plan to obtain premiums, determine or fulfill responsibilities for coverage and provision of benefits, and furnish or obtain reimbursement for health care provider to obtain payment or be reimbursed for the provision of health care to an individual.
  - Health care operations refers to certain administrative, financial, legal or quality improvement activities of a covered entity that are necessary to run its business and to support the core functions of treatment and payment.
  - Uses and disclosures with Opportunity to Agree or Object;  
Permission may be obtained by asking the individual outright or by circumstances that clearly give the individual the opportunity to agree or object, such as, family members who are responsible for the care or payment of care or other entities authorized by law. Individuals have the right to request (in writing) restrictions on how a covered entity will use and disclose protected health information about them for treatment, payment, or health care operations. A covered entity is not required to

agree to an individual's request for a restriction but is bound by any restrictions to which it agrees.

- Incidental Use or Disclosure refers to situations such as when an employee is discussing a client's health care eligibility on the phone and may be overheard by another employee who is not authorized to handle that client. The contractor must adopt reasonable safeguards and keep all disclosures limited to "minimum necessary".
- Public interest and benefit activities include
  - Information about victims of abuse, neglect or domestic violence,
  - Information required by law,
  - Health oversight activities,
  - Judicial and administrative proceedings,
  - Law enforcement purposes,
  - Concerning descendants,
  - Cadaveric organ, eye or tissue donation purposes,
  - Research purposes,
  - To avert a serious threat to health or safety,
  - Specialized government functions,
  - Worker's compensation.
- Limited Data Set refers to disclosed information for research, health care operations, and public health purposes. This excludes certain identifiers about individuals and family members: postal address other than city, state, zip code; telephone numbers; fax numbers; email addresses; social security account numbers; certificate/license number; vehicle identifiers and serial numbers; URLs; Internet Protocol address numbers; finger and voice prints; full face photographic images and any comparable images.

Exemptions include:

- Psychotherapy notes, except when these notes are used by the originator to carry out treatment, or by the covered entity for certain other limited health care operations, uses and disclosures of psychotherapy notes for treatment, payment, and health care operations requiring the individual's authorization.
- Information compiled for legal proceedings;
- Laboratory results;
- Information held by certain research laboratories.

A contractor may rely on an individual's informal permission to disclose to the individual's family, relatives, or friends, or to other persons whom the individual identifies, protected health information directly relevant to that person's involvement in the individual's care or payment of care. A contractor may also disclose an individual's information if the family member, friend or guardian is a personal representative. A personal representative is a person legally authorized to make health care decisions on an individual's behalf or to act for a deceased individual or the estate, such as, a parent or guardian of a minor child, legal guardian of a mentally incompetent adult, or descendant of a deceased individual. The personal representative is treated the same as the individual with respect to uses and disclosures of the individual's private health information.

## ***Filing HIPAA Complaints***

The client has the right to file a complaint if he/she believes the Privacy Act was violated. Contract agencies should designate a HIPAA coordinator to accept complaints. The local DHS Area Manager should be notified that a complaint has been filed. A complaint process must be designated regarding the contract agencies' policies and procedures and compliance with the same. All complaints and the disposition of each must be documented for a period not less than six (6) years.

Potential penalties for non-compliance would include:

- Civil penalties of \$100.00 per violation up to \$25,000.00 and criminal penalties, which include a wrongful disclosure offense of \$50,000, imprisonment of not more than one year, or both.
- Offense under false pretenses: \$100,000.00, imprisonment of not more than 5 years, or both,
- Offense with intent to sell information: \$250,000.00, imprisonment of not more than 10 years, or both.

**Each contract employee's responsibilities are:**

- To access only confidential information needed to do your job.
- Protect your computer passwords.
- Understand your agency's policies.
- Attend Training, and
- Report problems.

## **FAMILIES FIRST PROGRAM ASSESSMENT**

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### **Measuring the Results of Families First**

The Families First program requires a significant responsibility to evaluate and report results and cost benefit data to the Department of Health and Human Services. For this reason, DHS has contracted to the University of Memphis and the University of Tennessee to conduct extensive outcome, cost benefit and process evaluations of Families First. The evaluation includes but is not limited to:

- The results of work; including hours, types of employment, length of employment wages of the parents, including teen parents; return rates to welfare; lifestyle changes for the family, including school achievement level changes in the children; and changes in the number and frequency of births, including births to teenage mothers.
- The stability of children in their own homes or the homes of relatives as opposed to foster care placements; the incidence of marriage among welfare families and the effect of the involvement in the work of two-parent families on the child.
- The effects on the workforce of a better prepared and better trained welfare population motivated to work by time limits and the threat of sanctions.
- The level of cultural change in welfare offices, communities and among employers when work becomes the driving force of the welfare agency.
- Success in identification of and intervention in domestic violence among welfare families; identification of interventions in drug, alcohol addictions; identification and interventions in mental health and learning disabilities barriers.

This evaluation process requires contractor cooperation in several ways:

- Encouraging Families First participants to cooperate in any surveys, focus groups or interviews at the request of either university,
- Ensuring contract employees and sub-contractors cooperate in research initiatives.
- Ensuring DHS always has adequate data which reflects the current status of the participants by ensuring entry into the FF/JTPA data base.

### **Ensuring Department of Human Services Accountability**

Methods are in place to ensure that payment accuracy and standards of promptness are achieved. The University of Tennessee administers the Active Case Review (ACR) which is a third party review team checking the accuracy and timeliness of actions taken from a representative sample of active Families First cases throughout the state. The University of Tennessee, East Tennessee State University, and the University of Memphis administer the Customer Service Review (CSR) which is a review of all cases that are slated for closure reasons which do not result in a successful transition from Families First. This is an independent third party review to ensure correct policy application and to encourage compliance for those participants slated to be sanctioned prior to case closure. Prior to the closure action, a Field Supervisor reviews all written and verbal requests made by Families First participants to have his/her case closed. DHS accountability is also insured by these processes:

- Department of Health Authorized Auxiliary Payments  
Auxiliary payments may also be issued to assistance groups ineligible for assistance due to an unsuccessful departure from the Families First program, but who have been deemed by a public health professional to be in danger of losing their home or utilities or custody

of a child. These short-term benefits will be issued on a non-recurrent basis for one month at a time as long as the aid group remains eligible for such an auxiliary payment.

- **The Appeal Process**

Individuals who have been adversely affected will have an opportunity to file a request for an administrative hearing. Requests filed within 10 days of the adverse action notice may also include a request to continue benefits pending the outcome of the hearing. An appeal request may be filed up to 90 days following the action. To appeal, the best approach is for the participant to contact the Caseworker who took the contested action; however, a participant may appeal by contacting any representative of DHS.

## **Ensuring Contract Agency Accountability**

Each Families First grant contractor is required by contractual obligation to maintain an adequate financial system that meets the minimum requirements of the State. A major function of a financial system is to produce evident compliance with the provisions of DHS's legal contract with the agency. The accounting records must be supported by source documentation for monitoring and audit purposes. Agencies must ensure that Families First funds received and disbursed are accounted for consistently in accordance with applicable regulations and program objectives. The *Financial Management Guidebook for Contractors* details the requirements and expectations of Families First contractors.

Monitoring visits will be conducted to determine compliance and fiscal accountability in all agency components whether directly related to service provision or administrative in nature. Program integrity and quality management practices must be assured in a public-private alliance. Therefore, a unit of reviewers has been established for Families First contractor. This unit is a division of DHS Program Assessment. The on-site review allows the reviewers an opportunity to observe program activities, document pertinent information and make appropriate recommendations for each contract.

## SERVICE DELIVERY

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### Public Involvement

Local governments have numerous opportunities to be involved in Families First and many are serving as service contractors for education, training, or child care services. Most local school systems are involved in contractual relationships to provide Adult Education and GED services. Local Human Services offices are used in many instances for co-location of local government, and in some instances, Human Services Caseworkers are located in Department of Labor and Workforce Development Career Centers and other local training centers. All 95 counties in Tennessee have Families First Councils and there is a state-level advisory council. Councils at the local level are composed of a minimum of 60% employers, one community advocate, one individual from the religious community, and the local DHS Area Manager. Sub-committees of providers, community organization representatives, churches, government officials, and non-profit groups also meet to coordinate and collaborate on Families First issues. The state level Advisory Council is composed of fifteen members appointed by the Speakers of the Senate and House and the Commissioner of Human Services. The Council advises the Commissioner on issues related to the purpose, implementation and evaluation of Families First.

Many community organizations, school systems, religious groups, local governments, other state agencies, and not-for-profit organizations are providers of Families First work activity services, transportation, and support services. DHS does not provide any of these services directly, but contracts with providers in each community. Agencies may partner together to form a consortium with each entity being responsible for a portion of a county's services needs.

### Delivery Across the State

Human Services offices provide the same Families First activities to all participants. Families First services vary from county to county only to the extent that the needs of counties are different and the availability of services may be different.

Tennessee has four major urban areas and at least five semi-urban areas. The remainder of the counties are considered to be rural counties. The number of Caseworkers assigned to each county office is based, in the past, on the caseload size for that office. There are eight Department of Human Services' districts across the state, four urban and four rural. Each district has a District Administrator, a Family Assistance District Director, and Program Supervisors.

The rural districts are then divided into clusters of counties which are assigned an Area Manager. The Area Managers are supervised by the District Administrator and are responsible for the overall operation of the county office. The Area Managers are the liaison and contact point for contracting agencies within a county.

Each county office also has assigned one or more Field Supervisors. These supervisors supervise the Caseworkers within the office. The Field Supervisors are directly supervised by the Program Supervisors located in each district. The Family Assistance District Director in turn oversees the Program Supervisors. Program Supervisors are considered to be policy experts for the district and are the contact point for clearance of policy and procedure issues with the state office staff. An organizational chart for the Department of Human Services is included as *Appendix D* in this Manual.

The state level staff for the Families First program is divided into two units, the Policy Unit and the Services Unit. The Services Unit is responsible for funding accountability associated with the administration of the program. This includes assessment of the services needed as proposed in contracts with DHS and the procurement of these services. This unit also monitors performance outcomes and all programmatic functions of TANF that are not central to Families First. The Policy Unit is responsible for the accurate administration of the program as well as the contract services needed and provided by the Families First program. The Families First Policy and Contracts state level units share responsibility for the administration of Families First service design and delivery.

Eligibility is established in all Families First cases using uniform policies. Policies are defined in the Families First Policy Handbook that is used by all staff implementing the program and is available for public viewing at the central office and each local office. Portions of the Families First Policy Handbook are included in this Manual.

## **Satisfactory Participation**

The following rule describes satisfactory participation:

***The 90% Rule*** – Each participant is expected to attend Work Prep, Adult Education classes, Employment Career Services, and Job Skills training for no less than 90% of the time. The amount of time that constitutes “90%” is dependent upon the length of the activity.

**Activities lasting less than 30 days** – Attendance for activities that last less than 30 days will be based on the actual time in the activity. If the activity is:

- one week in duration, the participant cannot miss more than the equivalent of one half of an activity day;
- two weeks long, the participant cannot miss more than the equivalent of one activity day;
- three weeks long, the participant cannot miss more than the equivalent of one and a half days.

**Activities lasting 30 days or longer** – Attendance to activities which last 30 days or longer will be based on 90% of the days in each calendar month. If the first month or last month of the activity is a partial month, follow the criteria listed above for activities lasting less than 30 days. For example, a participant enters Adult Education on March 24. The 90% attendance for the first month will be based on the criteria listed above for a one-week activity. Beginning April 1, attendance will be based on 90% of the calendar month. (The participant can miss up to two days within a calendar month and still be within the 90% attendance rule.)

Contractors can grant waivers to this rule on very restricted occasions for routine absences. There are extenuating circumstances beyond the control of the participant that could result in additional absences. Participants should be asked to provide documentation to substantiate any extenuating circumstances. The substantiating documentation should come from a third party (i.e., physician, court, etc.). The documentation must be incorporated into the participant’s records and retained by the provider.

**Contractors will notify the Caseworker within three working days when the participant is not meeting the 90% rule.**

**Note:** If a participant misses several days of an activity with good cause, it is not necessary that he/she repeat the entire course in order for the course to be considered completed.

**Good cause can only be determined by the DHS Caseworker.** The portions that were missed can be “made up” **if the Caseworker determines good cause exists.** If the participant and the service provider agree that the course skills have been attained, the service provider can determine that the participant has successfully completed the component. In that case, the participant can enter another component.

If the days missed were without good cause and the 90% attendance rule was not met, the participant will have to complete the course again.

### **Satisfactory Progress**

Each participant will be measured against the satisfactory progress that applies to the activity in which he/she is engaged.

Satisfactory progress will be assessed by the instructor/facilitator. If the individual appears capable but is not putting forth a good effort, the instructor/facilitator will report to the Caseworker with details as to why this decision was made. The Caseworker will determine why the participant is not progressing and decide whether proceeding with the sanction process is necessary or if other services would be appropriate.



## DATA COLLECTION FOR FAMILIES FIRST

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The Families First program must maintain valid records of all work activities participants enter, when and how they complete activities, and the outcomes of their Personal Responsibility Plan (PRP) efforts. Providers are under contract to DHS to provide specific services to Families First participants. To document their efforts and successes, data management is critical. Otherwise, there is no proof of the work accomplished. The provider must maintain accurate records of client participation.

Data is maintained on both the ACCENT and JTPA data management systems. ACCENT is the Department of Human Services' computer system for determination of eligibility. JTPA is the computer system used to collect information concerning Families First work component activities. **Every provider is required to communicate all changes in the participant's activities back to DHS within three working days after the event occurs.** They must use the **JTPA Families First Tracking** forms to communicate these changes. Contractors are responsible for reporting entered employment and wages on the FF/JTPA Tracking forms. Local DHS offices may establish other reporting systems in addition to the FF/JTPA system, such as, monthly or weekly attendance reports. Another communication form provided is the **Notice of Change To/From DHS** which is to be used to report changes of which the provider becomes aware but are not appropriate to communicate via the JTPA Families First Tracking forms.

### Systems Information

There is no automated interface between the ACCENT and JTPA systems. Extracts from each system are made weekly and monthly and the extracted information is compared. As a result, a group of reports are produced on the DHS report producing system called INFOPAC. These reports and error reports from the JTPA system, called Police Reports, help the Caseworker and the Eligibility Assistant maintain accurate and timely records of each participant's PRP activities.

Families First must report activities and progress to the federal government quarterly. This data must be collected weekly and monthly to complete our quarterly requirements of tracking average weekly hours of participation, among other data elements. The information used for some of the federal reporting requirements and state performance measures comes from the JTPA system. In addition, researchers are studying the effectiveness of the program in promoting self-sufficiency. Because of the importance placed on the data pulled from the JTPA system, all DHS and contracted employees working with the Families First program share the responsibility for the accuracy of the information contained there.

### Work Participation Rate

Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) requires that states meet a specific work participation rate in order to retain their level of funding. Statistical information for this rate is extracted only from the JTPA system. The required minimum work participation rate increases each year. If Tennessee does not meet the required work participation rate, the Families First program could face financial penalties. To be certain of the highest possible rate, contractors must support all efforts to report participation status changes for Families First participants timely in order for the information to be entered into the JTPA system timely. It is especially important that all employment information be entered into the JTPA system.

## Data Integrity

The three individuals *primarily* responsible for data integrity are the Caseworker, the eligibility assistant and the grant contractor services staff. The provider for each activity is required to report on-going information regarding each Families First participant's status. These reports are made via status change forms called **JTPA Families First Tracking** forms. The eligibility assistant must then enter the information on the forms into the JTPA system. DHS local offices will provide training in how to complete these forms.

## Notification of Participant Status Changes

Some changes may be reported by a FF participant directly to the contractor rather than to the Caseworker or the grant contractor may become aware of these changes on his own. In addition to the work activity information, the following information that becomes known to the contractor, no matter how obtained, must be reported to the DHS Caseworker **within three working days**. The form, **Notice of Change To/From DHS** should be used for this purpose:

- Change in address
- Change in employment
- Family member(s) moves in or out of home
- Decrease/increase in wages or other income
- Change in school attendance of a child under 19
- Change in child care arrangements
- Any other change which can affect eligibility of the participant or the amount of benefits issued to the participant.

DHS Caseworkers also have a responsibility to provide data and information to contract providers. Caseworkers provide information to the eligibility assistant to key into the JTPA system when any information becomes known which affects the individual's ability to participate or the provider's ability to offer adequate service. In many instances, the eligibility assistant will notify the grant contractor immediately, such as, when a participant will not be able to attend a component activity and has reported this to the Caseworker or eligibility assistant.

Other examples for use of the Notice of Change to/From DHS form are:

- The family moved to another county or out of state
- Participant is temporarily ill or has a family emergency (good cause)
- Participant has become exempt or temporarily interrupted
- Case was closed and the reason for closure
- Address changed
- Family has been sanctioned
- Participant changes from mandatory to voluntary participation or vice versa.

There are other procedures which must be maintained during the time period the FF recipient is participating in a component, such as, regular feedback should be provided to the DHS Caseworker regarding the progress of the participant. If the contractor determines the FF client is not making satisfactory progress in the component, **this information must be reported to the DHS Caseworker within three days of this determination by use of the JTPA Families First Tracking form**. Documentation should be provided as to why the client is unable or unwilling to fulfill the requirements of the PRP and/or to the FF class to which he/she has been assigned.

Details on Satisfactory Progress and Participation of Families First clients can be found in that chapter in this Manual.

All expenditures for training, educational, employment and administrative costs in regard to FF should be documented as required for state and federal reporting purposes according to instructions in the *Families First Financial Management Guidebook for Contractors*.

## **Accessing Required Communication Forms**

**JTPA Families First Tracking forms** may be obtained through the local Department of Human Services. These forms are carbonized and routing instructions are included on the form. These forms report changes in participation status for the client through the use of codes and basic information.

**Notice of Change To/From DHS** is available in the Default Library located in the GroupWise communication system available to DHS and contract employees. If this system is not available, the local DHS office is responsible for making copies of these forms available to providers.

The DHS Area Manager is the contact point for obtaining necessary forms.

## **FAMILIES FIRST PROGRAM DEFINITIONS OF TERMS**

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The following are common terms used throughout this manual as well as the Families First Handbook:

**ACCENT** – is the DHS computer system that collects all client eligibility data, work history, and the basic elements of the Personal Responsibility Plan. ACCENT has the capability of calculating budgets and issuing payments to participants based on information entered by the DHS Caseworker. This information is used to develop referrals to service providers. When information is received from the provider, it is recorded in ACCENT. ACCENT has a running record narrative screen referred to as CLRC which contains documentation of the feedback from the service providers. Service providers may receive access to view the ACCENT screens, if it is necessary for them to do their jobs, but cannot receive a security clearance which allows entry into the system.

**Activity** - Refers to the work and work preparation components that compose the required hours of the work requirement to receive FF cash payments. Activities may also be referred to as “components” or “work components” or “work activities”.

**Adult Education** – is an activity designed to develop basic skills with the participant in reading, math, English and life skills and to focus on preparation for employment. It also included GED preparation and testing and is strongly suggested for participants who test below the 9<sup>th</sup> grade level. Non-English speaking participants must be accommodated.

**Auxiliary Payments** – Refers to Families First cash payments made to a participant outside the regular monthly issuance cycle of Families First cash benefits.

**Career Assessment** - is part of the Employment Career Services component and is the process by which the Families First participant’s aptitude, interests, and/or dexterity and marketable job skills are measured through a series of acknowledged assessment instruments. The results of the tests are

shared with the participant and form a base upon which the PRP will be constructed. The assessment testing is typically performed by Employment Career Specialists.

Career Centers – are a Department of Labor and Workforce Development initiative designed to provide 75% of all citizens access to free, comprehensive employment related services at a facility within 25 miles of their homes. The other 25% are served at affiliate sites known as TDOL&WD Local Offices or as “Affiliate Site”. Services are provided to both employers and job seekers. DHS and some DHS contractor agencies co-locate staff at the Career Centers. Career Centers also orchestrate training and provide a one-stop-shop service concept.

Career Planning - is a continuous process that begins with the a keen realization that a change is necessary, and ultimately leads to getting a job that is a suitable match with one’s interest and ability. Planning begins with an eligibility determination, an informal assessment by the Caseworker, a formal Career Assessment and entry into the necessary steps as shown on the Personal Responsibility Plan.

Career Portfolio – is a method of organizing assessment results, resumes, and other career-related information to catalog credentials and build a record of work experiences and skills. Portfolios can be written on paper or in a computerized format and can enhance the participant’s sense of progress and accomplishment.

Community Service Programs - this includes programs such as AmeriCorps, Job Corp, and VISTA. The hours participants spend in these programs count towards the 40-hour work requirement. If the position is considered full-time by the organization and is 35 hours or more per week, this will satisfy the full-time work requirement.

Component – Refers to the work and work preparation activities that compose the required hours of the work requirement to receive FF cash payments. Components may also be referred to as “activities” or “work components”.

Customer (or Client) Choice – In signing the PRP, the participant agrees to take certain steps to move the assistance group to self-sufficiency. The DHS Caseworker is responsible for ensuring that the caretaker has an opportunity to receive a clear explanation of each activity available. There are no mandatory activities in the Families First program, but there may be prerequisites, such as, taking a TABE test to score grade level prior to entering Adult Education. Each participant chooses the activities which make up the 40 hour work requirement.

Data Warehouse – is a tool to provide management staff with analytical management reports that will assist them in determining the effectiveness of the Families First program. The information is also used to validate data. Most of our INFOPAC reports give us a snapshot of what occurred the previous month, but data warehouse contains reports that provide up to the minute information that is currently in JTPA.

Demand Occupation - is defined by the Tennessee Department of Labor and Workforce Development and may be determined by using the DOLWD labor market information collected, published and shared on their website [www.state.tn.us/labor.wfd](http://www.state.tn.us/labor.wfd). Inquiries are made for a specific occupation in one of the thirteen Labor and Workforce Investment Areas (LWIA). A response is received which indicates whether the Growth Rate for this occupation in this LWIA is negative or positive. A positive result indicates the occupation is a demand occupation for that area. The

cosmetology field and sewing machine operator work are examples of employment that is not a demand occupation in most areas.

Employment – is working (either part time or full time) for wages. Full-time employment is defined as: any paid work equaling 40 hours per week, or any paid work equaling 35-39 hours per week which the employer considers to be full time; and any paid work in which the hours fluctuate but average 40 available hours a week or 35-39 hours per week if the employer considers these hours full time. The participant must be paid minimum wage or higher.

Employment & Career Services (ECS) – is an in-depth, comprehensive job search, job readiness, job placement, job retention and career advancement program. It is an assignment in how to look for a job, actual job search, and career development. ECS is facilitated on both an individual face-to-face format and in some instances a group format by an Employment Career Specialist. Generally, the Employment Career Specialist is recognized as a career counselor responsible for leading the activities of ECS and promoting the client's progress on a defined career path. ECS can be used alone to meet the 40-hour work requirement or it can be used in conjunction with other self-initiated components. ECS used alone to meet the full 40-hour requirement can last up to ten weeks. After ten weeks, the component can be a part-time activity as needed and when combined with another component and there is no time limit. If no other component is available, ECS may continue as a full-time activity.

Employer of Record – is the agency that employs service delivery staff. The agency furnishes benefits to the employee, such as, insurance, pension or paid leave, who pays the employee wages, and who withholds income tax, social security, Medicare, and unemployment taxes on the wages and provides supervision of the staff.

Extended Employment Career Services (ECS)-Continued employment and job advancement are the key components to Extended ECS. Extended ECS is available to participants whose Families First cash assistance payment is terminated and the participant has earnings at the time of closure. Services are provided to the Families First participant and to the employer.

Families First Council - The Department of Human Services is mandated by the legislature to provide an advisory council designed to advise the Commissioner regarding issues pertaining to the purpose, implementation and evaluation of the Families First program. The state advisory council is replicated in each of the 95 counties and provides guidance to local DHS administrators in Families First related issues. Each council is to be composed of 60% employers as well as representatives of the community. The council includes participants from local government, private non-profit, business and industry, organized labor, faith-based organizations, Families First participants, and others as may be appointed.

Family Services Counseling – Program designed and implemented as a work component of the Families First program to identify and address barriers to self-sufficiency in the areas of mental health, domestic violence, substance abuse, learning disabilities, and children's behavioral health. Masters' level mental health professionals and licensed alcohol and drug counselors contract to provide these services.

INFOPAC – refers to the DHS computer system which prepares and generates reports by using the information contained in the ACCENT system.

Inventory – is an informal questionnaire that is designed to help individuals learn more about themselves. With inventories, there are no “wrong” or “right” answers.

Job skills training - includes a variety of training, such as, vocational education training, on-the-job training, skills training, self-initiated training at a proprietary school, post-secondary education or training and post-secondary Internet studies. This is usually six to twelve months in duration and should lead to an hourly wage of \$8.00 to \$12.00. Training courses must be approved by THEC and must also be in a “demand” occupation as defined by the Tennessee Department of Labor and Workforce Development.

JTPA – stands for Job Training Partnership Act. The term is used by the Families First program to refer to the computerized database which captures client participation activity information. It may also be referred to as **JTPA-MIS** (JTPA-Management Information System). The database was originally developed by the TN Department of Labor and was adopted for use by FF because it was accessible to a variety of departments and agencies across the state. At the present time, the JTPA system is not used by other agencies and departments and is solely used by the FF program to capture required data elements.

Labor Market - The labor market is a dynamic relationship between employers and employees which can be affected by many trends and changes, such as constant advance of new technology, stockholders and management, legislation to protect diverse populations, and the rate of immigrants becoming citizens in the country.

Outcome Measures - serve as an accurate gauge of the effectiveness of the services offered to Families First participants by our contract agencies. Measurement of the goals of the Families First program by outcome measures represents a shift from a traditional approach of measuring *processes* to one of *accountability* by measuring the effectiveness of our services.

Personal Responsibility Plan (PRP)-an agreement between the Families First participant and the Department of Human Services that is completed for each Families First assistance group. In this agreement, the Families First participant agrees to take certain steps to move the assistance group to self-sufficiency. In return the Department of Human Services agrees to provide temporary cash assistance and support service to assist the caretaker/parent in gaining employment.

Post Secondary Education-training or education at a post-secondary school or institution that leads to a certificate, associate degree, or bachelor’s degree. For post-secondary education to be considered, the student participant must be enrolled fulltime. Graduate and post-graduate classes are not approved Families First work preparation/training components.

Screening - refers to the process of determining if an individual is “at risk” of a certain condition or challenge that would impede work and/or job retention. DHS case managers have been trained to identify certain barriers and the initial screening occurs during the interview with the participant. When a participant receives a career assessment, a screening tool, the Tennessee Employment Readiness Scale, is administered as a part of the career assessment process.

Self-employment – can be part-time or full-time. To be considered full-time employment, the income after the cost of doing business must be equal to at least minimum wage for 40 hours. If the income after the cost of doing business does not reflect this, divide that income by the minimum

wage. This will determine the number of countable hours for the self-employment activity on the Personal Responsibility Plan.

Self-Initiated Post Secondary Education- training or education at a post-secondary school or institution which leads to a certificate, associate degree, or bachelor's degree. Participants must participate in work related activities to fill any remaining hours necessary to meet the 40 hour work requirement, arrange for payment of their own tuition (registration fees), and meet other criteria for satisfactory participation, satisfactory progress and education/training.

Tennessee Higher Education Committee – THEC was created to coordinate and foster unity in higher education in this state. The Commission coordinates two systems of higher education, the University of Tennessee institutions governed by the UT Board of Trustees and the state universities, community colleges and Tennessee Technology Centers governed by the TN Board of Regents. THEC is the state agency that coordinates, monitors and maintains the Eligible Training Provider List for the Workforce Investment Act (WIA). Authorization is a function of the Division of Post-Secondary Authorization. Authorization may be granted to both degree and non-degree granting institutions and encompasses a wide variety of schools, such as, academic, trade, technical, career, and professional.

Work Participation Rate (WPR) – The federal welfare reform block grant, TANF (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families) requires that states meet a specific work participation rate. Failure to do so could result in the State being assessed monetary penalties. The required minimum rate increases each year. DHS reports on the number of hours and how many Families First participants are working, in training, in school, in ECS, or in another work-related activity. Not all activities provide hours that may be counted in determining the WPR.

Work Opportunity Tax Credit- WOTC provides tax incentives for employers to hire certain disadvantage individuals. The legislation provides an incentive for employers to hire certain disadvantaged individuals, which includes Families First participants and Food Stamp recipients.

Work Requirement – To receive cash assistance, all adults and minor caretakers who are not exempt and who are included in the assistance group must participate in a Personal Responsibility Plan that includes 40 hours of work and/or work preparation activities (with some exceptions).

## ORIENTATION TO FAMILIES FIRST

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### Orientation

A pre-plan discussion prior to the development of the Personal Responsibility Plan (PRP) must be held with each participant. Part of the discussion will encompass Orientation to Families First and an evaluation of the individual's circumstances that will affect his/her PRP. Orientation is required for all new Families First applicants, including those who have been off Families First for one year, or those current recipients as needed.

Orientation to Families First can be completed one-on-one by the Caseworker or can be included in a group forum. Orientation should occur following the determination of eligibility for the individual. Orientation conducted one-on-one should be a part of the individual's eligibility interview. Orientation as a group must be completed prior to developing the PRP. Orientation sessions are available for participants every two weeks at a minimum. Group orientation sessions should be at least one day in duration, but no more than two days. It should be interactive in groups of no more than 30 individuals. A DHS Caseworker or Field Supervisor must conduct the Orientation session. Eligibility Assistant cannot conduct Orientation sessions.

These topics must be covered as a part of the Orientation discussion whether conducted in a group or as one-on-one:

- Individual strengths;
- Goals of the Families First program;
- PRP development, time limits, sanctions, and renegotiations;
- Work, education, and training;
- Support services;
- Incentives to work;
- Transitional benefits
- Family Cap and Marriage During Receipt policies.

A standardized format for group Orientation sessions has been provided to DHS county and district offices. DHS offices may follow this format or make some adaptations, as long as the required topics are discussed. It is also required that the video, "Stories of Lives Changed" released by the Center for Literacy Studies be shown during Orientation.

Providers may be asked to participate as a part of the Orientation and should see this as an opportunity to discuss the merits of the work activity that they offer with the Families First participants.



## ADULT EDUCATION

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### Scope of Work for Adult Education

The contractor will provide Adult Education (AE) and related Families First activities, including but not limited to: basic skills, life coping, parenting, reasoning, listening skills, teamwork, work place, problem solving, and critical thinking skills. General Education Development (GED) instruction is given and as needed, English As a Second Language (ESL) **must** be furnished. Any non-English speaking Families First participant referred for AE must be served and his/her limited English proficiency must be accommodated.

Also provided is tutoring, and if possible, computer skills. In compliance with Families First policies and procedures established by the State of Tennessee Department of Human Services, at least seventy percent (70%) of all instruction will be directed toward basic skills leading to higher educational attainment using an employment-centered approach. Thirty percent (30%) of instruction will focus on the skills listed above.

### *Guidelines*

- The contractor will provide up to twenty (20) hours of instruction each week in academic subjects and life skills using work focused teaching methods and techniques for adults in grade levels K through 12 with open enrollment and self-paced instruction. All instruction must be tied to the goals of self-sufficiency.
- The teacher(s) for Adult Education classes will have a Tennessee Teacher's Certificate, have a demonstrated ability to empathize with the target population, show genuine concern for the problems experienced by the target population and instill a sense of pride of accomplishment in the students.
- The dominant teaching method will be group literacy techniques with the major focus of all instruction tied to preparation for the workplace. Classrooms will be student-centered and structured in such a manner as to encourage continuing active participation.
- The Adult Education activity is divided into six levels and progress is measured against each level. They are:
  - Adult Education below the 2<sup>nd</sup> grade level (<2<sup>nd</sup> grade)
  - Adult Education below the 4<sup>th</sup> grade level (AE 2.0 – 3.9)
  - Adult Education below the 6<sup>th</sup> grade level (AE 4.0 – 5.9)
  - Adult Education below the 9<sup>th</sup> grade level (AE 6.0 – 8.9)
  - Adult Education at or above the 9<sup>th</sup> grade level (AE 9.0 – 10.9)
  - Adult Education at or above the 11<sup>th</sup> grade level (>11<sup>th</sup> grade)
- The functioning level of the participant upon entry into Adult Education will be the baseline used to determine progress.
- Enrollment in this class will in no way affect the eligibility of students to enroll in other programs offered by the local education program. When warranted, students will be encouraged to dually enroll. For example: Students having difficulty with the materials in the class may be assigned to work with a tutor, or a student may be assigned to an ESL class, etc.
- Adult Education providers will take daily attendance of the students and report this to DHS at least every 5 days. All status changes (including enrollment or student advancement to the next level) for a participant **will be reported by the provider to DHS within 3 days of the occurrence**. The provider will complete the HS-2619 JTPA Tracking Form and sent this form to DHS.

### ***Class Arrangements***

- The Adult Education class schedules will be based on the needs of participant. Mornings, afternoon or evening classes are options. The Adult Education Supervisor and the Department of Human Services Area Manager will determine these mutually.
- Most Adult Education classes for Families First participants will be operational five (5) days per week for four (4) hours each day. The classes will follow the local Education agency's school calendar in regard to school breaks, snow days and all other holidays. The Adult Education classes for Families First participants will continue during the summer months. Variations in schedules may be permitted with the approval of the Area Manager, District Administrator and state office staff to better fit the needs in a particular area.
- Families First participants may be included in general population Adult Education classes with cost allocation accommodations made. These classes are allowable Families First activities even though the classes may not be for twenty hours per week for those who score above the ninth grade level. (The Adult Education program must have twenty hours per week available for Families First clients.)

### **Literacy Testing**

Literacy testing is an available activity designed to determine math and reading proficiency levels. Testing is strongly suggested for:

- participants who do not have a high school diploma or a GED, and
- participants who appear to be functioning below a 9.0 grade level in reading/math, regardless of academic credentials.

(Certificates of Attendance and Special Education Certificates are not the equivalent of a high school diploma or GED. Individuals with these certificates should be encouraged to take the literacy test and may be candidates for Family Services Counseling or Vocational Rehabilitation.)

The TABE Level D or BEST PLUS can be used for this test. While it is recommended that individuals take a literacy test, it is not required. However, literacy testing is a prerequisite for entering Adult Education as a component.

**Note:** If an individual leaves Adult Education and returns at a later date, he/she will be given a literacy test again if it has been ninety days or more since the date of their last literacy test.

Individuals with Limited English Proficiency (LEP) are given the BEST PLUS test. This test will determine the participant's grade level. Based on the test results, the provider can determine the participant's functional level and recommend either ESL or regular Adult Education as a work component. If the provider recommends Adult Education, the TABE test will be used to determine the participant's grade level. Regular Adult Education classes must serve ESL participants if there is not an available ESL class (20 hours).

### *Assessments for Literacy Testing*

- Assessments will be administered to the Families First clients using the TABE Survey Form 7/8 Level D or BEST PLUS **within three (3) working days from the date of the referral from the local Department of Human Services office. The Adult Education Supervisor will notify the referring local office of the Department of Human Services within three (3) working days of the score.** When possible, the tests will be administered in the local Department of Human Services office to better serve the client.
- The Families First teacher will administer subsequent testing at a **minimum** of every ninety (90) days, and the tests listed above must be used. The Families First teacher may retest at a **maximum** of once a month. Monthly testing may be done in these situations only:
  - The participant is exiting the Adult Education program (such as, employment, moving) and an exit test is needed; or
  - The Families First teacher realizes from working with a student that the scores on the first test are obviously not a true reflection of the student's ability (due to test anxiety or other unusual factors). ***Retesting is necessary to determine satisfactory progress and compliance.***

Jane Carr, DHS Families First Services Unit, must approve any testing outside the above minimum and maximum testing times. A written request should be made with a copy to the DHS District Administrator.

- The teacher will administer an official GED Practice Test when he/she determines the participant's readiness.
- The participant must score 2500 points or higher on the practice test before a voucher to take the GED can be awarded.

**NOTE:** Requests for Families First GED vouchers should be sent to TN Department of Labor, Attn: Bill Toombs, Program Manager, Division of Adult Education, Davy Crockett Tower, 11<sup>th</sup> Floor, 500 James Robertson Parkway, Nashville, TN 37245.

Persons wanting to prepare for the GED test may access assistance online at [www.gedonline.org](http://www.gedonline.org).

### **Referrals to Adult Education**

Adult Education is designed to develop basic skills in reading, math, English, and life skills and to focus on preparation for employment. It also includes GED preparation and testing. This activity is strongly suggested for those who test below the 9.0 grade level in reading or math (regardless of degree or certificate). It can also be an additional activity for those who:

- do not have a GED or high school diploma and function at or above the 9.0 grade level in reading and math; or
- have a high school diploma if their functioning level is low; or
- have a Special Education Diploma or Attendance Diploma (these participants should be encouraged to choose to go to Family Service Counseling or Vocational Rehabilitation), and

- are participating in a work related activity for 20 hours per week.

## **Measuring Levels of Progress in AE**

The AE activity is scheduled to end for the participant in 6 months, unless the participant tests below the 2<sup>nd</sup> grade level. Participants testing below the 2<sup>nd</sup> grade level will be allowed to remain in the AE activity for a period of 9 months. (This does not change the policy requirement to re-test for progress every 90 days.) At the end of 6 months (or 9 months if below 2<sup>nd</sup> grade) in the AE activity, the participant will be tested to determine if he/she is at the next progress level of AE. If the test determines that the participant is not at the next progress level in AE, the participant may opt to return to AE (with the understanding that another 3 months are being given to reach the next level) OR change to another activity and no longer remain in AE. Individuals who test below 2.0 on the literacy test must be offered a referral to the Family Services Counseling (FSC) program to be tested for a Learning Disability (LD). If the participant remains in AE and at the end of these 3 additional months the participant does not test out to the next level of AE, then the case must be conciliated. The DHS Caseworker will begin the conciliation process with a notice to the participant indicating a failure to make satisfactory progress.

If the participant responds to the notice and requests to continue in AE, he/she must complete the 2-week compliance period. During the 2-week compliance period, the participant may re-test to determine if he/she has progressed to the next literacy level. To correct the non-compliance situation, the participant must test and score to the next literacy level or higher during this 2 week compliance period. If not, the option for AE as a PRP activity will be withdrawn. The DHS Caseworker will renegotiate the PRP with the participant.

Individuals who are participating in ESL classes must conform to these same timeframes.

## **Adult Education Levels and Progress Procedures**

Individuals who test below 2.0 on the literacy test must be offered a referral to the Family Services Counseling (FSC) program to be tested for a Learning Disability (LD) prior to enrollment in AE. If the participant accepts the referral to FSC and screens positive for a learning disability through the FSC Assessment, then he/she may be referred for further psycho-educational testing as a part of the FSC assessment process. If the individual previously tested below 2.0 on the literacy test, and he/she chooses not to go to FSC for an assessment at that time but prefers to enroll in AE, he/she will have 9 months to increase his/her score in AE to the next literacy level.

Individuals who test at a level of 2<sup>nd</sup> grade or above and choose AE as their work activity on their PRP will have an expected completion date of 6 months to increase their AE score to the next level of progress.

After 6 or 9 months in AE, if tests indicate that the participant has not made progress (scored to the next literacy progress level), the AE instructor will notify the DHS Caseworker. At that point, the DHS Caseworker will contact the participant to renegotiate the PRP. The participant will be offered one of the following options:

1. A referral back to AE to score to the next or higher literacy level within a 90 day period (see Option Descriptions below); or

2. A referral to FSC for screening for LD and other possible barriers (if this option has not already been used previously. Refer to FSC Referral Procedures below); or
3. An opportunity to change his/her work component.

If the participant chooses a referral back to AE, and he/she does not achieve a score to the next literacy progress level within 90 days, the DHS Caseworker is to begin the conciliation process by sending a Notice of Conciliation. If the participant responds to the Notice and agrees to correct the non-compliance, he/she will have 2 weeks to test to the next literacy level at a minimum. If he/she fails to test at or above the next level, then he/she will have to renegotiate the PRP, as AE will no longer be an option for this individual. If the participant achieves a score at or above the next literacy progress level, he/she could re-negotiate the PRP for the next level of AE achievement. These same regulations apply to individuals enrolled in ESL classes.

## **FSC Referral Procedures**

If the participant requests a referral to FSC assessment for LD screening, the DHS Caseworker will complete a referral to FSC. The PRP must be renegotiated to reflect “FSC Assessment”. FSC completes an assessment that includes a screening for Learning Disabilities. If the screening indicates LD, FSC will refer the participant for a psycho-educational test. If the participant does not want to proceed with the psycho-educational test, then he/she will be referred back to the DHS Caseworker for re-negotiation. If barriers are identified by the FSC assessment, he/she may agree to work with FSC and renegotiate the PRP to include FSC.

If the screening proves that the participant is not LD and no other barriers are identified, or if barriers are identified but the participant does not opt to go to FSC, then he/she is referred back to the DHS Caseworker for re-negotiation of the PRP. They may re-negotiate for AE or some other activity.

If the participant is diagnosed with LD or another barrier that may affect participation, the psychologist will make recommendations for the services appropriate for the participant. The psychologist will send these recommendations to the FSC, and the FSC will review the results with the participant and may recommend appropriate activities to the DHS Caseworker. The DHS Caseworker will then renegotiate the PRP with the participant and make the necessary referrals and changes to the PRP. The recommendations of the psychologist may be released to the next service provider, if the participant signs a release of information so that accommodations can be made.

Once the participant completes a psycho-educational test, he/she may not be offered another psycho-educational test.

For individuals who choose to go to FSC assessment for the sole purpose of a screening for LD and are already enrolled in AE, the FSC assessment will account for 2 hours on the PRP, and AE will be 18 hours. The PRP will remain this way until the FSC assessment is completed (one month is the standard), and the PRP is renegotiated.

## Re-entry

If a participant is at a certain AE level and leaves the Families First program and at a later date returns, he/she will start the Literacy testing over, if he/she has been out of the Families First program for longer than 90 days. If he/she has been out of the program less than 90 days, then he/she is to start at the Literacy level at which he/she left.

Example: A participant tests at 4.8 and enters AE. After 90 days in AE, she is re-tested and scores 5.2. At this point, she is in the 3rd month of the 6-month progress period to achieve a literacy score of above 5.9. She leaves AE due to employment. After 2 months, she returns to the Families First program due to loss of a job. She will return to the previous literacy level. Since she was in the 3rd month of the process, she will have 3 more months to reach a score above 5.9.

## Adult Education as Training Preparation

Participants who have a GED or a high school diploma and who function at or above the 9.0 grade level may need some additional basic education skills to help them enroll in Post-Secondary Education or another training component. These individuals will be referred to the local Adult Education class if additional study is needed. The goal of this component is to help the individual achieve a certain level of proficiency, such as a passing score on the American College Test (ACT). The intent is to eliminate the possibility that the participant will have to take college remedial or developmental courses. The individual may participate in Training Preparation Education up to six months. If no Adult Education classes are available for Training Preparation Education, the participant will be referred to a local community college for these classes. Either way, this component will be part of a 40 hour work requirement and must be combined with work related activities. A formal ACT preparation class is not an allowable Families First activity. A participant can be referred for assistance in upgrading skills that the participant may be lacking at the time of the referral; however, Families First does not pay for a participant to take the ACT or any other test necessary to enroll in post-secondary education.

## Student Dismissal From Class

The Adult Education Supervisor may remove a student from the class for the reasons listed below. Prior to taking action, the Adult Education facilitator should discuss the situation with the DHS Area Manager.

- A. Unwillingness to complete work – removal for unwillingness to complete work will be documented by the following:
  - 1. Teacher's written statement (justification) to the effect that he/she believes the student is unwilling to complete work;
  - 2. Pre-test and post-test result over a period of at least 60 days showing no progress; or
  - 3. Low attendance rate that makes retention of skills unlikely.
- B. Behavioral Problems – removal for behavioral problems will be documented by the following:
  - 1. An incident report signed by the teacher; or
  - 2. A report of at least one counseling session in which the student has been told specific actions to take in order to make his/her behavior acceptable and what the consequences will be if he/she does not comply; or

3. Fighting or any other behavior that indicates a threat or danger to any other student or teacher will result in an immediate dismissal of the student who proposes the threat or danger.

C. Dismissal by Contractor – The contractor may remove a student from class at its discretion for just cause. (Documentation must be furnished)

For procedures on determining **Satisfactory Participation and Progress**, please refer to that chapter in this Manual.

Families First participants may choose to appeal any decisions made to dismiss them from class to the Department of Human Services Division of Appeals section. Requests to appeal may be made to any DHS employee directly or as a referral from a provider agency representative.

## EMPLOYMENT CAREER SERVICES

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### Purpose

Employment Career Services (ECS) is a work activity of the Families First program. The component is designed to assist families in permanently moving off public assistance by helping parents to become better skilled in accessing good jobs that pay family-supporting wages with fringe benefits, improving job retention, and encouraging upward mobility. It is not reasonable to solely rely on entry-level jobs to move families to self-sufficiency; local service providers, contracted by the State, must pursue strategies to promote skill development, non-traditional jobs for women, and career advancement.

The letters ECS refer to the services and/or the professional staff person assigned to carry out the duties and responsibilities of the component, and is used interchangeably.

### Overview

Employment Career Services is a ten-week work activity when used alone to meet the 40-hour requirement; and ECS can be used in conjunction with other components. When used alone, ECS can last up to ten weeks. After ten weeks, ECS should be limited to part-time hours and combined with another component. If another component isn't available, ECS can continue full time past 10 weeks. The client may continue in full-time ECS after the initial ten weeks only if there are no other available components. ECS activities include but are not limited to: assessing the client's readiness for employment, addressing any gaps in preparation with job readiness activities not addressed in Work Preparation, providing guidance with training and educational programs, assisting with jobs, job coaching to support job retention and advancement, and working with employers to develop jobs for clients.

The ECS has three major roles to fulfill in carrying out the intent of the component:

**Career Assessment** – Beginning with the intake interview, the ECS will conduct informal and formal career assessments. The ECS is responsible for sharing the results of this activity with the client and DHS Caseworker. The actual assessment and its results will be maintained in a confidential file.

**Career Advancement** – Assisting clients in career planning and preparation, such as developing short and long term career plans, using the worldwide web in career planning, compiling client portfolios, monitoring job search activities, assist with locating job training and subsequent enrollment, referrals to community support services and tracking clients before and after employment is secured.

**Job Development** – Developing relationships with employers is critical to the success of the ECS' effectiveness in the placement of clients in jobs. The ECS is provided a Job Development Checklist and Job Development Log in *Appendix A* of this manual. The forms should be used as guides to meet and document employer conversations. Other activities include but are not limited to coordinate activities with appropriate staff at the Department of Labor and Workforce Development in seeking tax credit technical assistance for prospective employers, conducting special events to promote the awareness of job slots, such as career fairs, business coffee breaks at the providers site, and networking opportunities.



## **Staff Expectations and Responsibilities**

The Employment Career Specialist serves dual customers: the client and the employer. The ECS is an extension of the Caseworker's management of the employment and training spectrum of the client and this relationship is paramount in the overall success of the client to become self-sufficient. The Caseworker and the ECS are to work hand-in-hand in assisting the client.

Meeting with clients who are employed or have other special needs may result in the ECS working outside the office core hours of operation. It is an expectation that the ECS will adjust her/his schedule to accommodate clients. **No participant should be asked to miss work in order to keep an appointment with the ECS.** The ECS must make arrangements through the Area Manager when it is necessary to meet a client after normal working hours.

The duties and responsibilities of the Employment Career Specialist include but are not limited to:

- ❖ Collaboration with the Caseworker and client
- ❖ Career planning
- ❖ Administering, interpreting and scoring career assessments
- ❖ Monitoring/counseling all participants in training courses
- ❖ Counseling for career advancement and wage gains
- ❖ Maintenance of client records
- ❖ Compiling regular reports
- ❖ Assisting with training and education access
- ❖ Identifying and accessing services for retention support
- ❖ Job coaching and counseling
- ❖ Job Development
- ❖ Linking mentors to participants

Ideally, Employment Career Services will be delivered in a holistic manner in that the same person administering and interpreting the Career Assessment instrument results will be responsible for assisting and tracking individuals from screening until 12 months after case closure due to earnings. Specialization of ECS may be appropriate. For instance, one ECS may conduct career assessments, or one ECS may perform job development duties. Approval for specialization must be obtained from the DHS district office. In areas where specialization occurs, the ECS responsible for career advancement must be present when the career assessment results are given to the client.

### ***Educational and Employment Requirement for Employment Career Specialists***

Staff assigned to this activity must have a college degree and at least one-year experience in the Families First program, a similar program or two years in a related field. After employment, ECS staff will receive training in a nationally certified course in career development facilitating from DHS. ECS staff will also be trained to use the Work Know How curriculum but it is the grant contractor's discretion whether to offer this curriculum as a Work Preparation Activity.

#### **Career Development Facilitator Training**

DHS offers a nationally certified course in career development facilitating for Employment Career Specialists as induction training. The course is tailor-made to address the duties and responsibilities of the ECS staff by blending twelve competencies established by the National

Career Development Association (NCDA) into a reality-based learning experience in preparation for working with Families First participants. In cooperation with NCDA, DHS will require 120 hours of coursework, including 90 hours of classroom participation and 30 hours of distance learning through means of independent study. Certification classes are offered quarterly. Additional classes may be offered on an as needed basis. The calendar of dates and locations of classes will be posted electronically to all providers.

The contracting agency is responsible for obtaining the Student Manual from NCDA for the ECS' use during class. The manual becomes the property of the contracting agency, not the ECS.

Each Employment Career Specialist will also be trained to use the *Work Know How* curriculum during the induction training sessions. The *Work Know How* can be downloaded from the DHS website, [www.state.tn.us/humanserv/wkh\\_home.htm](http://www.state.tn.us/humanserv/wkh_home.htm).

### **Case Staffings**

The term “case staffing” refers to a conference between the participant, DHS Caseworker, and the ECS who administered the career assessment to discuss the results, and during the Steps to Encourage Personal Success Program (STEPS), designed to assist participants in reaching their goals prior to the 60-month lifetime limit of months. Intensive case management procedures begin with the 54<sup>th</sup> - month of the time count requiring a case staffing. The ECS who is assigned to the case must attend this staffing session and is responsible for addressing the minimum of five mandatory hours that will be renegotiated on the PRP during the staffing. Any exceptions or other policies relating to this can be found in the Families First Policy Guidebook which contains the Work Requirements chapter of the Families First Policy Handbook. *Appendix E* contains all the necessary forms for a case staffing.

### ***Career Assessment***

The first major step in Employment Career Services is to conduct an Intake Interview, the beginning of the career assessment process. While this is an informal assessment, the ECS is required to complete this process and maintain a copy OF a completed intake interview in a separate career assessment portfolio. (It is generally understood that the ECS will discuss all of the benefits of ECS the scope of service and establish a rapport with the client before administering the intake interview.) A career assessment is the process of evaluating the participant's aptitude, interests, and/or marketable job skills. The Employment Career Specialist (ECS) administers, scores, and interprets the results of the Career Assessment. The results are shared with the client and DHS Caseworker and used to develop the Personal Responsibility Plan (PRP). A career assessment will be performed with each participant who enters ECS and should be repeated at least every two years. Career assessment may be administered more often if the ECS or DHS Caseworker determine it would be of value to the client.

**When a referral is made to Employment Career Services, the ECS must complete the Career Assessment process within the first two weeks of ECS.** The career assessments may be offered in a group or by individual appointment.

## ***The Career Assessment Process***

The career assessment process can be administered to an individual or to a group. If a group setting is not appropriate for a client, an individual appointment should be made with that individual. The ECS should be accessible to the client throughout the process and remain in the room with the client during the assessment administration.

1. When a referral for career assessment is received and the client has been advised of the process, conduct the initial interview with the participant using the *Screening Intake Interview* form. (A copy of this guide is included in *Appendix A*)
2. After the interview is completed, administer the Tennessee Employment Readiness Scale (Readiness Scale).
3. Score the Readiness Scale immediately upon completion. If the results indicate a potential referral to another component, the ECS should:
  - Immediately refer the participant to the DHS Caseworker for a potential renegotiation of the PRP (see special notes about FSC referrals); or
  - Honor the client's decision to remain in ECS; and
  - Proceed with the completion of the providers' selected career assessment instruments
4. Score and interpret all test results.
5. Complete a Career Assessment Summary Report Form to be forwarded to the DHS Caseworker.
6. Conduct a case staffing including the client, DHS Caseworker and the ECS responsible for the career advancement phase of ECS and discuss the results. When the DHS Caseworker is not present for the case staffing, the ECS will discuss the possibility of a referral to another component and refer the participant to the DHS Caseworker for a renegotiation of the PRP.
7. File the Career Assessment Summary Report Form in the client's portfolio and keep it confidential.

A model **Career Assessment Summary Report** can be found in *Appendix A*.

## ***Tennessee Employment Readiness Scale (Readiness Scale)***

The Tennessee Employment Readiness Scale is an instrument developed by the University of Memphis Center for Rehabilitation and Employment Research. The purpose of the Readiness Scale is to identify participants who may need to be referred to Family Services Counseling or other components before entering training or employment.

The Readiness Scale may contain questions considered to be invasive and of a private nature. Individuals have the right to refuse to complete the Readiness Scale with no negative consequences to their FF eligibility. The Readiness Scale may contain confidential medical information and must be held in the strictest confidence. The Readiness Scale may not be transmitted by email, fax, or copied and mailed by the ECS to the referral agency. The document must remain in the participant's career assessment folder and should be held in a locked file cabinet. The ECS should maintain a separate participant file folder for career assessment. This file should follow the participant who transfers to another county.

The Readiness Scale should be given to individuals as the first formal assessment in the career assessment process. The Readiness Scale was designed specifically for the Families First population

who read at the seventh grade level or higher. For those who are reading below seventh grade, the ECS may need to administer the scale verbally.

The Readiness Scale is scored immediately after its administration to the participant. If the results indicate the participant should potentially be referred to another component, such as, Family Services Counseling, Vocational Rehabilitation, Adult Education, or Work Preparation, the ECS should continue with the appropriate options listed above in number three (3) of the Career Assessment Process.

In addition to administering the Readiness Scale during career assessment, the Readiness Scale may be administered any time a participant enters the ECS component, if the participant agrees. ECS staff must use sensible judgment to determine whether it is appropriate to re-administer the Readiness Scale to the ECS participant outside the career assessment process.

### ***FSC Referrals***

For potential FSC referrals, the ECS should make a personal contact with the DHS Caseworker on behalf of the participant to obtain a renegotiation appointment. If the ECS identifies a situation where the participant is in danger of harming herself or others, the ECS should follow the procedures outlined in the chapter on Family Services Counseling to make an emergency referral. In non-emergency situations, the manner in which the ECS handles the transition to the FSC must be conducted with professionalism, respecting the client's confidentiality and trust.

### ***Career Advancement***

Career Advancement is a term used to refer to the Employment Career Specialist's responsibilities, which begin following the career assessment and extend for one year after case closure due to employment. Career advancement activities include:

1. Offering career counseling and guidance
2. Career planning using Internet resources, such as the Source
3. Providing structure in the development and maintenance of client portfolios
4. Assisting in addressing "at risk" factors identified during the screening
5. Developing career plans that relate to career assessment results
6. Advancing skills sets learned in Work Preparation
7. Connecting clients to educational and training programs
8. Linking clients with appropriate employers
9. Monitoring job retention and wage advancement
10. Assisting the individual for a year after employment with earnings that require case closure
11. Plan class visits to job fairs, career centers, and networking opportunities
12. Make referrals and connect clients to needed community resources

ECS will develop information resources regarding various occupations, the training requirements, earning potential, and working conditions. The *Occupational Outlook Handbook* is one such resource. This publication is available on the Internet at [www.bls.gov/oco/](http://www.bls.gov/oco/). The ECS should assist participants in the use of these resources in their career development and search for employment.

The number of job search contacts a participant is required to make should be individualized. The goal is not to require an unreasonable or even a set number of job contacts each week. **However, the activities and contacts set by the ECS must be in proportion to the number of hours required for the participant to spend in ECS as agreed to on the PRP.** Quality, not quantity, is the objective. Each client must complete an *Employer Contact Sheet*. It is critical for clients to make a serious job search and document each employer contact. Each time an entry is made on this form it should be placed in the client's file and maintained until employment is obtained. This form can be found in *Appendix A* of this Manual.

Clients in ECS must have a portfolio. The portfolio is a tool for accountability of the work that is being done in ECS. *Appendix A* contains the form, *Customer Portfolio Checklist*, which lists the required documentation for a client's portfolio in ECS.

### ***Extended Employment Career Services and Career Advancement***

The Employment Career Specialist (ECS) will develop a method of continuing to serve participants who have gone to work, lost FF cash benefits and have earnings. The only exception is the ECS cannot serve those individuals in an aid group where the case was closed for a sanction or non-cooperation reason, even if there was employment at the time of the closure. Extended ECS continues to provide support with employment retention and advancement for twelve (12) months after individuals leave Families First with earnings.

#### **Responsibilities of the Employment Career Specialist after case closure:**

1. During the first month after case closure, the ECS will contact the client on a weekly basis.
2. Monthly communication should be maintained for the remainder of the 12-month period.
3. The ECS will be available to meet with the client and employer to assist in addressing issues that may prevent success in the workplace.
4. Coordinate with the DHS Caseworker in referring a participant to the Family Services Counseling when appropriate.
5. Refer clients to the appropriate community agency to obtain the necessary services.
6. Assist in developing strategies to assist with job retention and to obtain wage increases.
7. Assist in developing long-range career advancement goals.

When the client requests to no longer be contacted, report this to the Caseworker to be noted in the ACCENT running record and the case should be removed from the total case count for extended employment cases.

### ***Job Development***

Job development is critical to the success of providing Employment Career Services. In order to assist Families First participants in career advancement activities, the ECS must be well informed of local labor market trends, the local business leaders, and potential employment opportunities.

It is impossible to develop job leads and form relationships with employers without getting out into the community on a regular basis. The ECS must build a relationship with training providers and employers in order to offer an appropriate fit. Learning the working culture of an industry or business enables the ECS to better understand how to meet that employer's needs. The ECS has been provided the brochure, *Families First: The Transition from Welfare to Work* to use with potential employers of Families First participants. The front page of the brochure details positive

information about the program and dispels some popular “welfare myths”. The reserve side provides a place for the ECS’ name and telephone number. The brochure details the benefits available to participants and explains the consequences of quitting work. Reviewing this information with an employer affords an ECS the opportunity to demonstrate the intensity of services available. (Brochures should be ordered through DHS offices.)

It is critical to maintain current labor market information. The Department of Labor and Workforce Development has a website available, The Source, which as a database designed to provide comprehensive labor market information on a county-by-county basis. The Source can be found at [www.state.tn.us/labor-wfd/source/](http://www.state.tn.us/labor-wfd/source/). ECSs are expected to maintain current labor market data for their areas in order to provide effective career counseling, matching skills to labor demands and to clients.

The ECS should establish a working relationship with local employers and expected to:

1. Establish business partnerships to facilitate assisting clients with employment
2. Work closely with employers to identify jobs in demand, respond to employer’s needs, and include employers in program design and development
3. Focus on the quality of jobs and target firms with good jobs and opportunities for growth and advancement
4. Promote career advancement
5. Maintain a current knowledge of labor market trends, the local business leaders, and potential employment opportunities
6. Schedule regular monthly visits with employers to determine vacancies, position requirements, wages, and benefits.
7. Inform the employer of potential candidates, the available transitional benefits (i.e., childcare, TennCare, and transportation assistance) and details of the Work Opportunity Tax Credit.

The ECS must be prepared for each interview with a potential employer. DHS has developed a checklist for this purpose, *The ECS Job Development Checklist*. This form assists the ECS in researching the company prior to the interview, establishing the issues to address during the interview, and following up. This form can be found in *Appendix A* of this Manual.

While frequent contacts with employers are important, several ECS who work together should coordinate their visits to prevent duplication of efforts. Agencies with multiple ECS should avoid multiple appointments with the same employer. It is important to insure that employer visits are of assistance to the employer and do not become time consuming.

The ECS should identify non-traditional employment opportunities. Examples of non-traditional occupations for women are bricklayers, mechanics, construction workers and welders. If the non-traditional employment is a demand occupation in the community, employer specific skills training could be arranged.

It is imperative for the ECS to document job development activities. DHS provides a form for tracking employer contacts, *The Job Development Log*. This form provides a format for listing the basic information obtained from the job development contact. The form can be found in *Appendix A* of this Manual.

## ***Data Reporting***

Information concerning ECS caseload sizes, employment placements, and other pertinent information will be obtained from the JTPA database. **It is vital to Families First program funding that our data be as accurate as possible.** JTPA is the computer system used to collect information concerning Families First work component activities. **Every ECS is required to communicate all changes in the participant's activities back to DHS within three working days after the event occurs.** They must use the **JTPA Families First Tracking** forms to communicate these changes. The ECS is responsible for reporting entered employment and wages on the FF/JTPA Tracking forms. Local DHS offices may establish other reporting systems in addition to the FF/JTPA system, such as, monthly or weekly attendance reports. Another communication form provided is the **Notice of Change To/From DHS**, used to report changes of which the provider becomes aware but are not appropriate to communicate via the JTPA Families First Tracking forms.

Each ECS should develop his/her own statistical reports to keep track of caseload size and activity. In addition, the contract agency, DHS district and county offices, or the DHS state office may require regular reports.

### **ECS Monthly Report to Families First Services Unit (DHS State office )**

The DHS State Office Families First Services Unit requires a monthly report from **each ECS**. The purpose of the report is to gather information concerning the activities of the ECS staff across the state. Until the implementation of a computer system that will enable this information to be gathered electronically, this reporting method must be used.

The Employment Career Services Monthly Report form may be obtained from the DHS county office Area Manager of Field Supervisor. A copy of the report, instructions for completing it and mailing directions can be found in *Appendix A* of this Manual. The report is due in the DHS state office by the 10<sup>th</sup> working day following the end of the prior month.

**Each ECS is to complete a form.** For ECS staff who cover more than one county, a report should be completed for each county. For larger counties with multiple ECS, each ECS should complete a report and designate his/her assignment if it differs from the information requested by the report.

## PERFORMANCE INCENTIVE PROGRAM/ECS PLUS

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### Overview

Grant contractors choosing the Performance Incentive option will serve Families First participants through a redesigned format for service delivery. Whereas grant contractors opting traditional cost reimbursement grants deliver services through the components Employment Career Services, Work Preparation and Job Skills training, those opting for the Performance Incentive grant contract will deliver services through the component ECS Plus.

### Introduction to ECS Plus

ECS Plus is a work activity that replaces ECS, Work Prep and Job Skills in counties where the core contractor has chosen the performance incentive option to contracting. Every participant referred for ECS Plus must be served regardless of their readiness for work (i.e. post-secondary students, when barriers to employment exist etc.) ECS Plus encompasses all employment related activities that a core contractor is responsible for delivering:

- ✂ Work Prep
- ✂ Employment Career Services
- ✂ Job Training

### Service Delivery

#### ***Assessment:***

When a participant is referred to ECS Plus a career assessment will be performed. The results of that career assessment will be shared with the caseworker on a form developed by DHS (*see Appendix A*). The assessment will include the Tennessee Employment Readiness Scale and other instruments the contractor decides upon.

#### ***Referrals:***

DHS eligibility counselors will be creating referral forms for the new fiscal year as participants come into the office for appointments, changes in PRP, or other required visits. Therefore, if contractors do not have referral forms for participants when they have been providing service, FF Services staff will verify whether a participant is long term or short-term participant. However, the referral form must be presented if the contractor received one.

#### ***PRP Requirements:***

The contractor will provide employment services that are needed to prepare the participant for employment. The contractor must provide the hours of activities that are on the participant's PRP. The contractor must report changes in the participant's status to DHS within three working days (i.e. compliance, work, etc.) using the DHS form HS-2619.



## Satisfactory Participation

The following rule describes the requirements for participation:

***The 90% Rule*** – Each participant is expected to attend Work Prep, Adult Education classes, Employment Career Services, and Job Skills training for no less than 90% of the time. The amount of time that constitutes “90%” is dependent upon the length of the activity.

Activities lasting less than 30 days – Attendance for activities that last less than 30 days will be based on the actual time in the activity. If the activity is:

- one week in duration, the participant cannot miss more than the equivalent of one half of an activity day;
- two weeks long, the participant cannot miss more than the equivalent of one activity day;
- three weeks long, the participant cannot miss more than the equivalent of one and a half days.

Activities lasting 30 days or longer – Attendance to activities which last 30 days or longer will be based on 90% of the days in each calendar month. If the first month or last month of the activity is a partial month, follow the criteria listed above for activities lasting less than 30 days. For example, a participant enters Adult Education on March 24. The 90% attendance for the first month will be based on the criteria listed above for a one-week activity. Beginning April 1, attendance will be based on 90% of the calendar month. (The participant can miss up to two days within a calendar month and still be within the 90% attendance rule.)

Contractors can grant waivers to this rule on very restricted occasions for routine absences. There are extenuating circumstances beyond the control of the participant that could result in additional absences. Participants should be asked to provide documentation to substantiate any extenuating circumstances. The substantiating documentation should come from a third party (i.e., physician, court, etc.). The documentation must be incorporated into the participant’s records and retained by the provider.

***Contractors will notify the Caseworker within three working days when the participant is not meeting the 90% rule.***

**Note:** If a participant misses several days of an activity with good cause, it is not necessary that he/she repeat the entire course in order for the course to be considered completed.

**Good cause can only be determined by the DHS Caseworker.** The portions that were missed can be “made up” **if the Caseworker determines good cause exists.** If the participant and the service provider agree that the course skills have been attained, the service provider can determine that the participant has successfully completed the component. In that case, the participant can enter another component.

If the days missed were without good cause and the 90% attendance rule was not met, the participant will have to complete the course again.

## **Satisfactory Progress**

Each participant will be measured against the satisfactory progress that applies to the activity in which he/she is engaged.

*Satisfactory progress will be assessed by the instructor/facilitator. If the individual appears capable but is not putting forth a good effort, the instructor/facilitator will report to the Caseworker with details as to why this decision was made. The Caseworker will determine why the participant is not progressing and decide whether proceeding with the sanction process is necessary or if other services would be appropriate.*

## **Attendance**

The grant contractor is responsible for documenting and reporting the participant's attendance to the services provided by ECS Plus. Reporting is of particular important because this information is necessary for the client to receive transportation and childcare assistance. The grant contractor will be instructed by local DHS staff whether this information should be reported to the local DHS office or directly to the transportation/childcare provider.

## **Fee for Service**

A fee for service agreement is encouraged as an option for core services providers to obtain individualized services to meet the needs of the client when these services aren't available in house. A fee for service situation can be used amongst Families First services providers or with service providers outside the Families First program.

It is important that performance incentive contractors recognize that DHS caseworkers may decide to refer a client to a Families First provider outside the geographic confines of the county. Typically this action is only taken because of client choice or in situations when it is beneficial to the client, for example, when geography causes a transportation barrier that is easily overcome by way of a referral to a provider in a neighboring county.

## **Invoicing for ECS Plus**

The contractor will be reimbursed for placements in employment and retention for participants served in ECS Plus. The contractor will invoice for expenditures during the invoice month plus will list persons who attained employment or retention in that month. The following back-up documentation is required to be approved for invoicing:

- A copy of the participant's pay stub, **or**
- A copy of the DHS employment verification form, **or**
- Another approved form that verifies employment, wages, SSN, date of employment, hours engaged in employment etc. **AND**
- A copy of the DHS referral form that lists how long a participant has been receiving cash benefits (i.e. "case status" or "cash months").

This invoice will be sent to:

Jane Carr, Program Coordinator  
400 Deaderick Street  
12<sup>th</sup> Floor, Families First Services  
Nashville, TN 37428

Contact Information:

Phone: (615) 313-4887

Fax: (615) 313-6639

Email: jane.carr@state.tn.us

Once it has been verified that the Families First case is closed, benefits reduced by 50%, or retention criteria have been met (see *Appendix A* to view the payment chart) the invoice will be forwarded to DHS' fiscal services to be paid. If a participant's case has not been closed, the contractor and the Field Supervisor 1 in the county will be notified to determine what needs to occur to finalize the case. The grant contractor and DHS share the responsibility of ensuring all case related information is up to date. The contractor is responsible for submitting any changes affecting a case, such as employment to DHS as quickly as possible. DHS staff will be responsible for verifying and entering this information into the ACCENT system. If it is determined that it will take longer than a week to close the participant's case, the contractor will be notified and that participant will not be approved for payment on the invoice. The contractor will resubmit the participant's information on the following month's invoice to receive payment.

## **Use of Incentive Funding**

A general guideline for determining the use of the earned performance incentive funding is that the funding must be used for the delivery or support of the Families First program. This guideline is limited by only three governing standards; the information contained in the *Financial Management Guidebook for Contractors*, the relevant federal Office of Management and Business (OMB) circulars and a law that restricts the use of TANF funding as an incentive to employers to hire Families First participants.

## **Incentive Eligibility**

Parameters have been established defining cases that are eligible for the redemption of the performance incentive funding.

### ***Employment***

- The date the participant entered employment will be the date used to start the retention month count. The date the participant entered employment may not coincide with the date the FF case gets closed, therefore, the initial payment for entering employment will be withheld until the case is closed. If the participant is employed at the time of the referral to the contractor the referral date will be the reference date for retention.
- If the participant becomes employed during the mid-point of a month, the client must remain off cash assistance throughout the following month before the contractor is eligible for the employment incentive.
- Grant contractors can claim an employment incentive payment from the date documented on the referral.

### ***Retention***

- For Fiscal Year '05, contractors may begin submitting verification of employment for participants who gained employment as of April 1, 2004. The contractor will not have a referral form that lists how many months a participant has been receiving Families First cash assistance, therefore, that will be verified by staff in FF Services. The contractor will then be notified of what category the participant falls in, short term or long term participant. The contractor will not be reimbursed for initial employment but the time will count towards retention, therefore, making the contractor potentially eligible for retention payment as early as December 1, 2004.
- Retention of employment counts as 9 months employed off of Families First. If a participant loses a job and gets back on Families First cash benefits then finds another job the contractor is NOT eligible a second time for the initial employment payment. The time the participant began receiving FF benefits again will be subtracted from the retention count. For example: Participant gets employed in July 1 2004. Job is lost October 1 2004 and participant returns to FF for 2 months, then the participant enters employment again in December 1 2004. The contractor would not be eligible for retention until May 2005. The maximum length of time a participant can be unemployed and receiving cash benefits before the retention count restarts is 3 months. If the client has been employed before they are referred to the contractor, the contractor is not eligible for the initial employment incentive payment but will be eligible for a retention payment with a start date for retention considered the date of the referral.
- Retention payments are available for up to 12 months after the termination of the grant term.
- The participant's case status (i.e. Long Term or Short Term) will be based on the case status at the time of the referral.

## **Data Reporting/Tracking**

### ***A. General Reporting***

Information concerning ECS caseload sizes, employment placements, and other pertinent information will be obtained from the JTPA database. **It is vital to Families First program funding that our data be as accurate as possible.** JTPA is the computer system used to collect information concerning Families First work component activities. **Every ECS is required to communicate all changes in the participant's activities back to DHS within three working days after the event occurs.** They must use the **JTPA Families First Tracking (HS 2619)** forms to communicate these changes. The ECS is responsible for reporting entered employment and wages on the FF/JTPA Tracking forms. Local DHS offices may establish other reporting systems in addition to the FF/JTPA system, such as, monthly or weekly attendance reports. Another communication form provided is the **Notice of Change To/From DHS**, used to report changes of which the provider becomes aware but are not appropriate to communicate via the JTPA Families First Tracking forms.

Each ECS should develop his/her own statistical reports to keep track of caseload size and activity. In addition, the contract agency, DHS district and county offices, or the DHS state office may require regular reports.

## ***B. ECS Monthly Report by County***

The DHS State Office Families First Services Unit requires a monthly report for ECS activities. The purpose of the report is to gather information concerning the activities of the ECS staff across the state. Unlike standard ECS reporting, the provider's programs identified as ECS Plus is only required to submit the ECS activities by county, as opposed to reporting for each ECS. A copy of this report should be sent to the DHS State office as well as a copy to the DHS District office. Electronic versions of this report are preferred.

The Employment Career Services Monthly Report form may be obtained from the DHS county office Area Manager or Field Supervisor. A copy of the report, instructions for completing it and mailing directions can be found in *Appendix A* of this Manual. The report is due in the DHS state office by the 10<sup>th</sup> working day following the end of the prior month.

## ***C. Assessment Summary***

### ***The Career Assessment Process***

A career assessment must be completed by all participants referred to ECS Plus if the participant hasn't completed a career assessment within the last two years. It is at the grant contractor's discretion whether to re-test individuals that have been tested within two (2) years. The only assessment that is required is the Tennessee Employment Readiness Scale. Details of this assessment will follow. In addition further detail will be provided for situations in which the Tennessee Employment Readiness Scale reveals information that may necessitate a referral to FSC.

Once the grant contractor's assessment process is completed, a career assessment summary must be provided to the DHS caseworker responsible for the client's Families First case. A model **Career Assessment Summary Report** can be found in *Appendix A*.

### ***Tennessee Employment Readiness Scale (Readiness Scale)***

The Tennessee Employment Readiness Scale is an instrument developed by the University of Memphis Center for Rehabilitation and Employment Research. The purpose of the Readiness Scale is to identify participants who may need to be referred to Family Services Counseling or other components before entering training or employment.

The Readiness Scale may contain questions considered to be invasive and of a private nature. Individuals have the right to refuse to complete the Readiness Scale with no negative consequences to their FF eligibility. The Readiness Scale may contain confidential medical information and must be held in the strictest confidence. The Career Assessment Summary Report Form should not be e-mailed, faxed, or mailed by the ECS to the Caseworker. The document must remain in the participant's career assessment folder and should be held in a locked file cabinet. The ECS should maintain a separate participant file folder for career assessment. This file should follow the participant who transfers to another county.

The Readiness Scale should be given to individuals as the first formal assessment in the career assessment process. The Readiness Scale was designed specifically for the Families First population who read at the seventh grade level or higher. For those who are reading below seventh grade, the ECS may need to administer the scale verbally.

The Readiness Scale is scored immediately after its administration to the participant. If the results indicate the participant should potentially be referred to another component, such as, Family Services Counseling, Vocational Rehabilitation, Adult Education, or Work Preparation, the ECS should continue with the appropriate options listed above in number three (3) of the Career Assessment Process. In addition to administering the Readiness Scale during career assessment, the Readiness Scale may be administered any time a participant enters the ECS component, if the participant agrees. ECS staff must use sensible judgment to determine whether it is appropriate to re-administer the Readiness Scale to the ECS participant outside the career assessment process.

### ***FSC Referrals***

For potential FSC referrals, the ECS Plus staff should make a personal contact with the DHS Caseworker on behalf of the participant to obtain a renegotiation appointment. If the ECS Plus staff identifies a situation where the participant is in danger of harming herself or others, the staff should follow the procedures outlined in the chapter on Family Services Counseling to make an emergency referral. In non-emergency situations, the manner in which the ECS Plus staff handles the transition to the FSC must be conducted with professionalism, respecting the client's confidentiality and trust.

## **D. Case Staffing**

In ECS Plus there are three types of case staffing. The first is an internal (i.e. within the confines of the service provider) meeting between the service delivery staff at the contracted agency and the client. The expectation is that this case staffing will occur at least after the ECS Plus client has been engaged in services for three (3) months. The second case staffing with the client will be from a multidisciplinary approach. This meeting should occur after the client has been engaged in services for six (6) month. The ECS Plus provider should host the multidisciplinary staffing. They should invite all professionals from all disciplines that are working with the client. This could include but is not limited to the DHS Caseworker, FSC Counselor, ECS or training facilitator. The last type of case staffing is the 54 month STEPS staffing. This case staffing is designed to assist participants in reaching their goals prior to the 60-month lifetime limit of months. Intensive case management procedures begin with the 54<sup>th</sup> - month of the time count requiring a case staffing and 5 hours of ECS Plus will be included on the participant's PRP.

## **E. Transcript**

### ***Documentation of Classroom Activities***

Since the Families First participant's PRP will document only that they were engaged in ECS Plus and not the specific sub-activities, the grant contractor is expected to maintain a transcript for each client enrolled in ECS Plus and participating in classroom activities. This transcript is a record that documents the start/completion dates for the classroom activities. The grant contractor is required to submit a final report to the Caseworker identifying the

activities completed and the certifications, licenses, or degrees (if any) that were obtained while participating in ECS Plus. The transcript will be a document that is cumulative and can be submitted to fulfill this requirement once the client has completed ECS Plus.

## TRAINING

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### Overview

The goal of Job Training in Families First must be to place the participant into the very best employment possible, one with benefits and growth potential. Research substantiates that the better the first job, the more likely the individual will stay employed, will advance in a career, and will leave poverty. Families First recognizes these types of training:

- Work Preparation training
- Job skills training

The results of the career assessment should be used to identify possible training activities suitable for the participant. The results of the career assessment process should be tied directly to the training course(s) pursued by the Families First participant. The DHS Caseworker and Employment Career Specialist (ECS) should understand the availability and purpose of training courses in order to market them when career assessment results are being given to the participant.

Training choices made by the participant should lead to a specific employment goal and should be consistent with the results of the career assessment. A history of prior training courses completed by the client must be obtained, and those courses should not be duplicated. Training courses should serve as building blocks toward the participant's long-range goal.

### **WORK PREPARATION ACTIVITIES (Work Prep)**

#### Overview

Work Preparation Activities, or hereafter referred to as Work Prep, is a blanket term used in Families First to describe a menu of training curricula used by the Families First grant contractor to prepare clients to enter employment or to engage in Job Skills training. This menu of sub-activities included under the umbrella of Work Prep is to be developed by the grant contractor.

Some curricula have been developed and utilized in the Families First program in the past (e.g. Fresh Start, Your Employment Success (YES), Work Know How). These activities and this curriculum were referred to as life skills or "Soft Skills" training. Because some grant contractor's are familiar with these options and found the curriculum to be effective, the Department is encouraging the continued use of these curricula, but requiring only that the grant contractor offer one, Parenting and Consumer Education (PACE) at least once every 6 months.

As opposed to prescribing the curriculum and activities that will define Work Prep, the Department required that each grant contractor provide a proposed Work Prep curriculum with the submission of their response to the Announcement of Funding. In addition to the proposed curriculum submitted with grant contractor's response to the Announcement of Funding, agencies are encouraged to adapt the curriculum to the changing needs of the Families First client as well as to meet the demands of workforce area's employer community. The Department is relying on the grant contractor to use their knowledge of the employer community and expertise for the delivery of employment related services. The grant contractor should combine these attributes with DHS's own research and



experience serving the TANF population to provide client's with the skills necessary to become employed, progress on their career path, or go further into Job Skills training.

## **Work Prep Design Parameters**

Work Prep is best understood as the entry point in the Families First program where a client begins obtaining the skills necessary to gain and retain employment. Work Prep is intended to serve clients that do not possess the skills necessary to move directly into a job or career path that will result in their self-sufficiency.

Clients referred to grant contractors will enter the agency's Work Prep activities at various levels of preparedness. For the more skilled client, Work Prep is simply a "brush up" on the skills necessary to gain employment. For less skilled clients, Work Prep is a set of activities that can be used to prepare them to enter Job Skills training. It is for this reason that the grant contractor must plan developmentally appropriate activities addressing individual needs, such as parenting, developing a resume, interviewing skills, and basic computer skills. The results of the career assessment should help to individualize activities to address specific needs.

## **Work Prep for Employment**

Some clients referred to Work Prep will possess the education or technical skills that enable them to become employed, yet they need specific work related skills or life skills that will prepare them to begin working with an ECS to search out job opportunities or provide them with the life skills necessary to retain employment. For example, the clients that are ready to begin the search for employment may benefit from a class in resume' writing while the clients experiencing difficulty with job retention may benefit from a life skills course such as conflict resolution, time/resource management, etc. Often times these individuals will be referred with Work Prep on their PRP as they may already be working with an ECS that is assisting them with the identification of employment opportunities.

## **Work Prep for Training**

Some clients will be referred to Work Prep that have no post-secondary education or technical job skills. For these clients the grant contractor must address their Work Prep needs from the perspective that they will either need to participate in Work Prep activities that provide an employer specific skill and skills that will result in entry-level employment or else from the perspective that they will need the skills that will prepare them to be successful in Job Skills or post-secondary training environment. These clients may also often be referred to Work Prep component because their other work requirement may be any combination of ECS, Job Skills training, Adult Education, and employment or in some cases Family Services Counseling.

## **Work Prep for Skills Necessary for Career Development**

Clients referred to Work Prep with an emphasis on career development need additional skills that will result in promotion and/or wage progression. These clients are typically employed and/or working with an ECS. The best Work Prep activity for these individuals would be a curriculum that addresses areas related to success in the work place. For instance, the knowledge, skills, and attitudes identified by employers that a successful employee would possess.

These categories are used to simply state that Work Prep is intended to be a multitude of activities and curriculum offered by Families First grant contractors that will best serve the type of client most often referred in the contractor's workforce area. Grant contractors are ultimately charged with engaging clients in classes to address barriers that prevent them from obtaining and retaining employment.

Although most of the Work Preparation component will be made up of sub-activities that are at the discretion of the grant contractor, one will be required. The Families First law specifies that the program will offer a life-skills course. The Department has determined that the required life skills course will be Parenting and Consumer Education (PACE). It is required that all participants referred to Work Prep have the opportunity to attend a PACE session. The PRP will not list PACE as an activity, Work Prep will be listed as the activity.

## **Parenting and Consumer Education (PACE)**

PACE was developed to provide instruction on the basic life skills needed to be successful in the workforce and improve the quality of life for the family. PACE must be offered to Families First participants at least once every six (6) months. The curriculum and training are available at no cost to the contractor from the Department of Human Services. The delivery of this material is extremely flexible as there is no specific order for facilitating the curriculum modules. The curriculum offers a framework on which to build activities. PACE is divided into two segments, Parenting Education and Financial Management. PACE can be a part of other work components, or it may be used as individual modules for participants who need additional hours in order to comply with the 40-hour work requirement.

### ***PACE and First Wheels***

Completion of the Financial Management segment of PACE is a requirement for the First Wheels Program. First Wheels is the Families First program offering no-interest car loans to eligible participants. First Wheels applicants must have active or inactive Families First cases or be Food Stamp recipients or low-income childcare recipients. Applicants are required to complete a personal financial management class of five (5) hours which includes instruction on the preparation of a monthly household budget. PACE is the recommended curriculum for this course. PACE facilitators must be aware that referrals for First Wheels applicants may be received. (Details are available in the Families First Policy Handbook.) Applicants who are receiving transitional Families First benefits, Food Stamps or low-income childcare will not have a Work Component Referral form completed in the usual manner. To refer these individuals, Work Component Referral forms may be adapted for use by completing the appropriate blanks and indicated "First Wheels" in red on the form.

### ***PACE Training for Facilitators***

Training to facilitate the PACE portion as a sub-activity under Work Prep must be done by the Department of Human Services Family Assistance Training Unit. Certification is a requirement of the Department of Human Services. Certification must be in process or attained within the contract period. The Facilitator's agency is responsible for contacting the State office of DHS to make the necessary arrangements to complete the certification process. To be certified to facilitate PACE, PACE facilitators must submit a resume, successfully complete 10 hours of Basic PACE training, provide a Marketing Plan for making PACE known to Caseworkers and potential clients, and a

report on the number of PACE clients during a 6 month period (this list is not all inclusive and is subject to change).

A PACE curriculum manual will be provided to each facilitator during the Induction Training. The manual is the property of the contracted agency. If a facilitator vacates the position, the PACE manual is to remain with the agency for use by the next facilitator. If the contract with an agency ends, the PACE manual(s) is to be returned to DHS.

Facilitators are responsible for maintaining client's' records which shall include progress reports and daily time and attendance reports. As with all contract staff, the facilitator must report to the Department of Human Services Caseworker any situation that affects the Personal Responsibility Plan within three (3) days.

### ***Classroom Guidelines for PACE Sub-activity***

The PACE curriculum offers a framework on which to develop stimulating, realistic and meaningful work-focused activities. Each module has been designed in blocks of time ranging from thirty minutes to two hours. PACE may be used as a 20-hour component or lesser amounts per week for clients who need additional hours in order to comply with the 40-hour requirement.

Parenting Education covers such issues as early childhood development, adolescence, teen parents, and dealing with difficult family situations (i.e., divorce, domestic violence, illness). Financial Management prepares participants for the transition to self-sufficiency. Modules teach participants how to budget their income, how to balance a checkbook, and how to rent or purchase a home.

Parenting and Consumer Education (PACE) consists of two weeks of Parenting Education and two weeks of Financial Management classes. A 20-hour class will meet for 4 hours per day, 5 days per week. If transportation is a barrier to conducting the class five days per week, permission may be granted to operate on a 5 hours per day, 4 days per week schedule. Other schedules of 20 hours or less per week must be arranged based on the client's needs and the needs of the DHS county office. PACE workshops address Knowledge, Skills and Attitudes (KSAs), those skills identified by Tennessee employers as essential for entry-level employment and job promotion

All PACE facilitators will utilize the "Smart From the Start" flip chart developed by the Tennessee Department of Education. The flip chart is designed for parents who have children under the age of six. DHS county offices may order copies directly from Central Supply Center. Order number 715020008767 designates the English version and 715020008768 designates the Spanish version.

PACE materials may be duplicated. Approved supplemental materials may be used to enhance specific workshops.

### ***Additional Examples of Work Prep Sub-Activities***

- *Your Employment Success (YES)*
- *Survival Skills*
- *Work Know How*
- Keyboarding
- Customer Service Skills
- Computer Skills

- Collaboration with ongoing training at Tennessee Career Centers and other community organizations
- Other core services provider developed activities
- Job Clubs

## **Funding for Work Prep**

\$400.00 upon enrollment in Work Prep with a particular agency. Grant contractors will be paid for up to two work prep enrollments for the same individual. An enrollment is defined as an individual that completes five (5) days for Work Prep activities in accordance with DHS's ninety percent attendance policy (*See the Families First Handbook for policy information*). It should be noted that a client can only attend Work Prep twice within their 60 month lifetime limit on the Families First program. Hence a grant contractor can only invoice twice for the same client. If the participant is referred to another agency, the referral is considered as an initial referral. Because of this, grant contractors are encouraged to engage clients and take measures to ensure continued attendance to Work Prep activities. Co-enrollment of Families First clients with the grant contractor's other service population is strongly encouraged. Co-enrollment enables agencies to cost allocate the costs associated with providing Work Prep activities.

## **Suggestions for Developing Work Prep Activities**

Contract providers may create training, co-enroll Families First clients in the agency's existing Work Prep type classes, sub-contract with other agencies to provide classes, or purchase Work Prep classes on a fee for service basis from other agencies. All are acceptable so long as the classes fall into the classification of Work Preparation activities. Each DHS District Office is encouraged to work closely with contract agencies to secure quality training courses for participants.

Core service providers are encouraged to be creative and to develop Work Prep activities. Listed here are suggestions of successful practices that could be incorporated into an agency's design of Work Prep:

## **Guidelines for Developing Work Prep Classes**

When considering the development of sub-activities that meet the criteria for Work Prep, the following information should be helpful:

- When referred to Work Prep, the client's PRP will only read that the client is engaged in "Work Prep" and it will identify the number of hours they are responsible for completing. The client's PRP will not reflect the sub-activities offered by the grant contractor under the umbrella of their Work Prep program. This enables the grant contractor to transition the client from one sub-activity to another without the need to renegotiate the client's PRP.
- Families First policy is definitive in the parameters placed on the client's successful progression along his/her career path. Policy requires that the participant must enter activities within 2 weeks of the date the PRP is signed (or the approval date of an application). Work Prep activities should be designed to have an open-entry policy.
- Grant contractors must ensure that clients participating in Work Prep are completing the hourly requirements on their PRP. This time is typically up to 20 hours. Families First participants attending a Work Prep activity must be involved in a work related activity in

addition to the training, such as, employment, participating in Employment Career Services or Community Work Experience. As with all Families First components, if the component does not total the hours required by the client's PRP, the participant must also have a work-related activity.

- A Work Prep class is defined as a class of five (5) or more Families First participants **or** in an environment of co enrollment, a class can be a single Families First client co enrolled in a group made up of a like population. In rural areas where a Work Prep class cannot be formed and co enrollment is not an option, the ECS should provide training that fits the criteria for Work Preparation activity. In this scenario, the contractor would only invoice for the salary of the ECS and not for the Work Prep component.
- A client can be engaged in a Work Prep component for up to six (6) months. They can only be enrolled in Work Prep twice within their 60 month time limit on Families First. If a participant is a "no show", or drops out soon after enrollment this is not considered an enrollment for billing purposes. If a participant who has already completed Work Prep is re-referred, they may participate a second time and the contractor will receive payment. Because of these limits, contractors are encouraged to keep the client engaged and make effective use of the two opportunities to obtain the skills provided in Work Prep.
- Work Prep is not a stand-alone component. It must be provided in combination with another component in order to meet the requirements of a 40 hour participant work plan.

Grant contractors are expected to provide a list of Work Prep sub-activities to the DHS District Office(s) in their services area(s). This list should contain the following information:

- Name of the curriculum or sub-activity
- Brief description of the objectives and activities of the curriculum
- A schedule of the activities by county and site of activity

This list will be distributed to the respective counties and disseminated to the Caseworkers for use as a reference sheet. This list will serve as a resource to DHS Caseworkers to aid them in identifying if Work Prep is a suitable component for their clients. The description of the curriculum will assist the Caseworker in marketing the Work Prep program as well.

## **Documentation of Work Prep Activities**

Since the Families First participant's PRP will document only that they were engaged in "Work Prep" and not the specific sub-activities, the grant contractor is expected to maintain a transcript for each client enrolled in their Work Prep program. This transcript is a record that documents the start/completion dates for the Work Prep sub-activities. The grant contractor is required to submit a final report to the Caseworker identifying the activities completed in Work Prep. The transcript will be a document that is cumulative and can be submitted to fulfill this requirement once the client has completed Work Prep.

## **Job Skills Training**

### **Overview**

Job Skills Training includes the types of training listed below:

- **Vocational Educational Training**– Short-term industry specific training is limited to two six-month periods or twelve months lifetime. Examples of Vocational Education Training are auto repair, phlebotomy, Certified Nursing Assistant, Medical Records, Clerk, Secretary, Truck Driver, Pharmacy Technician, Surgical Technician, Licensed Practical Nurse, and non-traditional jobs for women in the construction or manufacturing industry.
- **On-the-Job Training – (Families First funds cannot be used to subsidize these wages.)** OJT Training is provided by an employer and a wage is paid. The Local Workforce Investment Areas (LWIA) or another training program may subsidize training. This activity also includes apprenticeship programs that offer a stipend or wage.
- **Post-Secondary Education or Training** – Training or education at a post-secondary school or an institution that leads to a certificate, associate degree, or bachelor's degree is post-secondary training.
- **Employer-Specific Training** -- Employer Specific Training is short term training identified by a business or industry as needed in order for Families First participants to become employed by a specific employer.

### **Costs of Job Skills Training**

No financial assistance will be provided through Families First for individuals who are participating in PELL eligible training. This is true even if the individual attending a PELL eligible institution is unable to personally get a PELL grant or if his/her PELL grant has already been exhausted.

PELL grants are approved for the duration of the school year. For technology centers, this usually is ten months. PELL grants for colleges and universities are approved for two consecutive semesters. Participants who want to attend school a third semester within the year will be responsible for paying their own tuition or working full-time during this semester.

Families First funding may be used for tuition assistance for non-PELL eligible training provided it is in a demand occupation at a rate of up to \$1200.00 per course per participant. (Instructions for determining demand occupations can be found in *Appendix F*.) However, if funding for the training should end, the individual must renegotiate his/her PRP and access a PELL eligible training or provide his/her own tuition to continue the training.

Families First may be provided for necessary training supplies not funded through other sources whether the training is PELL or non-PELL eligible.

Employment Career Specialists (ECS) will assist the participant in locating institutions or training that will provide training in their field of interest and will accept PELL grants.

For information concerning available financial aid and the application process, visit the Tennessee Student Assistance Corporation website at <http://www.state.tn.us/tsac/finaidpr.htm>.

Occasionally, training is furnished free of charge by an employer, such as, Certified Nursing Assistant training at a local nursing home in need of employees. The agency or employer conducting the activity must provide data as required for all Families First activities and will be monitored

regularly by the unit of Program Assessment. The employer must follow the procedures for obtaining approval for the training course.

## **Wilder-Naifeh Technical Skills Grants**

Any Families First client that is currently a Tennessee resident and has been for at least one (1) year prior to the application date, is at least 18 years or older or has a high school diploma/GED is eligible to apply for the Wilder-Naifeh Technical Skills Grant.

The grant requires no minimum high school grade point average nor are ACT test scores required for admission.

Up to \$1,250 (subject to the availability of funds) per year is available for Wilder-Naifeh recipients. The grant will not exceed \$1,250, however, this amount will be adjusted down to meet the student's actual tuition costs.

Students can enroll as a full-time or part-time as a Tennessee Technology Center student. As long as they are pursuing a diploma or certificate there is no set minimum number of hours.

Families First clients interested in applying for Wilder-Naifeh Grants must complete a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). The completion date for FAFSA is May of each year but applications processed after May 1 will be accepted, but preference will be given to those processed on or before May 1. Contractors should encourage timely submission of the form.

To maintain satisfactory academic progress (a grade of "C" or better and meet attendance requirements). It is important to note that this grant is a one-time award. If the student loses the grant due to unsatisfactory progress, he/she will no longer be eligible for future receipt of a grant. For this reason, it is particularly important that Families First contractors ensure that the client is adequately prepared to succeed in Job Skills training.

Any individual who receives the Hope Scholarship is not eligible for the Wilder-Naifeh. Hope Scholarship recipients who enroll in a community college or four-year institution and drop out before completing their program cannot receive the Wilder-Naifeh Grant.

Lastly, the client cannot be in default on a Federal Title IV educational loan or Tennessee Education loan or owe a refund to either of the two.

Families First Core Services providers can use this information as an additional resource to access Job Skills training opportunities through the Tennessee Technology Centers statewide.

## **Availability of Training to Participants**

A Families First participant has up to 30 days to complete pre-enrollment testing, apply for financial aid, or other required activities. During the 30 days, training is the only required activity on the PRP if the training course will result in a 40-hour commitment following the 30 days. If the institution's schedule is delayed beyond the 30 days, the participant may be given additional time but will have a 40 hour commitment. This commitment can be met through:

- Attend training preparation courses, if these courses total 40 hours;

- Attend Work Prep activities in combination with training preparation courses;
- Participate in the Employment Career Services activity with the goal being employment which will not interfere with the training schedule;
- Employment; or
- Unpaid work experience up to 40 hours (Fair Labor Standards Act requirements must be met) until the semester or quarter begins.

Although the participant must continue in 40 hours of component activity, these activities can be changed when the training or post-secondary education activity becomes available. Also, a participant may be granted good cause for voluntarily quitting employment or reducing his/her work hours for the purpose of entering or continuing a training course fulltime provided they are an active Families First participant at the time. (Refer to the Families First Policy Handbook for further information.)

## **Training Referral Limitations**

Clients may not complete one training course and immediately enter another; however, it is possible for a participant to enter a job skills training course immediately upon completion of a Work Prep training course. Any remaining hours needed to total a 40-hour commitment must be in a work-related activity (Employment Career Services, Employment, Work Experience, or Community Service).

**Once a training course is successfully completed, before any additional training courses may be entered, a participant must:**

- Be employed in a position directly related to the job training received for a minimum of 2 months; OR
- Be engaged in Employment Career Services for a minimum of 2 months attempting to locate employment in the field of training.

An exception can be made only if the courses were identified as necessary by the DHS Caseworker for the client's career goals and the District Program Supervisor approves this as necessary.

Clients should not be trained for more than two Work Prep enrollments or two job skills training courses during the 60-month lifetime period of eligibility unless one or more of these circumstances exist and the District Program Supervisor has given approval for an exception to be made:

- The client has been in Employment Career Services and has not been able to find employment within a reasonable driving distance in that field;
- The employment opportunity pursued no longer exists in the area;
- The employment career goal of the participant requires more training;
- Circumstances in the client's life have dramatically changed and a new career path is being pursued.



## **Procedures for Failure to Complete Training**

Clients who are referred to training programs who do not complete the course and who do not have good cause may be referred back to this same course only once more. (Good cause determination policies can be found on page 151 of the Families First Policy Handbook.) Failure to complete the course following the second referral will result in the client's inability to attend the course again, unless the client had extenuating circumstances which prevented completion and the approval of the District Program Supervisor is given. A two-month period must pass before the client will be able to enter a different training course. During this time, the individual may not include any hours in a training related activity as a part of their work environment.

## **Referrals for Job Training**

When participants select job training as a component, their PRP will reflect the following:

- Referral to ECS for a career assessment prior to training, and/or
- Self-initiated job training.

### ***A. Referrals to Employment Career Services for Career Assessment Prior to Training***

Families First participants who enter the ECS activity for the purpose of attending job training will be given a career assessment during the first two weeks of the activity if necessary. The Employment Career Specialists will encourage training for those participants who are ready to enter. For those who need to overcome barriers or increase skills, the ECS and DHS Caseworker will work together with the participant to develop a plan for achieving the goal of entering training.

The DHS Caseworker will refer the participant to the ECS for assistance in:

- Arranging federal, state, and/or other grants or financial aid to pay tuition;
- Choosing a facility which meets state accreditation requirements, has acceptable placement standards, and maintains a quality program; and
- Choosing a course of study in a "demand occupation".

ECS's responsibilities include establishing that:

- The facility is in good standing with the federal financial aid office being allowed to accept federal monies;
- Is a facility, which meets U.S. Department of Education accreditation requirements, maintains a quality program, and meets acceptable placement standards.

### ***B. Self-Initiated Referrals***

Families First participants may enter a training course on their own. With the help of the ECS, these individuals must arrange for payment of their own tuition (registration fees), meet other criteria for satisfactory participation, make satisfactory progress, and meet the education/training institution's requirements. These individuals must renegotiate the PRP with the DHS Caseworker to show training as a work component. However, DHS will not pay for the training or training supplies. Transportation and other support services may be paid.

## Satisfactory Participation

Although the attendance rules for colleges and training institutions vary, they will serve as the standard for satisfactory participation in all job skills training. For example, the institution may have a rule that the individual cannot pass if he/she misses more than four classes.

While it is sometimes difficult to get colleges and universities to report attendance when they are not under contract to DHS, the responsibility lies with the participant to ensure that a record of his/her attendance is kept and provided biweekly. One method is to have the participant carry an attendance sheet and ask his/her professors to sign acknowledging that he/she is satisfactorily attending class and making satisfactory progress. The DHS Caseworker should follow up at least every quarter or semester to verify ongoing attendance.

## Satisfactory Progress

*An individual participating in job skills training must:*

- maintain a 2.0 grade average. If the participant falls below this level, he/she will be given one quarter/semester to bring the average up to 2.0. If the grade average does not reach 2.0, conciliation/sanctions procedures will be initiated by the DHS Caseworker.
- maintain academic standards equivalent to those of the state's Technology Centers (if the participant chooses a non-collegiate institution) and make satisfactory progress toward completion, as defined by the institution.
- 

## Determining Job Skills Training Hours

Individuals who choose job skills training components are required to have a 40 hour work requirement. To determine the total number of training hours, the DHS Caseworker will combine the class/credit hours with student internships, labs, tutoring hours and study time. The DHS Caseworker will count one hour of study time for each hour of credit time or each hour of class time when study is required. If the total training hours (class plus study hours) total 40 hours, then no other activity is required. If the total training hours do not total 40, then a work related activity must be combined with the training activity. If the hours totaled for course and study work exceed 20 hours per week, then work related activity hours will be less than 20 hours so that the total PRP work plan does not exceed 40 hours per week. (Refer to the STEPS requirements for those participants who are at the 16<sup>th</sup> or 54<sup>th</sup> months in their lifetime count.)

## Training Preparation

Adult Education offers training preparation courses for participants who have a GED or a high school diploma, who function at or above the 9.0 grade level, and may need some additional basic education skills to help them enroll in a training component. Individuals in need of this type training should be referred to the local Adult Education class. The goal of this component is to help the participant achieve a certain level of proficiency, such as a passing score on the American College Test (ACT). The intent is to eliminate the possibility that the participant will have to take college remedial or developmental courses. Training Preparation Education may be taken for up to six months. This would be part of a 40-hour work requirement and must be combined with work related activities.

## OUTCOME MEASURES

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### Overview

During the Fiscal Year 2005, only baseline data will be gathered and used for the future establishment of Outcome Measures. The Outcome Measures selected will serve as an accurate gauge of the effectiveness of the services offered to Families First participants by our contract agencies. Measurement of the goals of the Families First program by outcome measures represents a shift from a traditional approach of measuring *processes* to one of *accountability* by measuring the effectiveness of our services.

Activities are designed to meet different objectives and will be divided into groups with objectives based on the group's activities. The groups to be measured are Adult Education, Family Services Counseling, and Work Prep activities, Employment Career Services, and Job Training.

Performance Measures for:

- Job Training
- Work Prep Activities
- Employment Career Services

These components will be measured monthly for all participants who exit ECS. The measures will be the completion rate, the placement rate, wage increases and job retention.

The contractor will not be required to submit reports for compiling performance measures. The data will be derived from internal and external sources.

### Outcome Detail

**Completion Rate:** The Completion Rate will be calculated by taking the total number enrolled in an activity minus the number not actively attending to equal the number open to evaluation. The number open to evaluation is divided by the total number who have completed and the result is the Completion Rate.

**Placement Rate:** The Placement Rate is calculated by using the number who have left ECS and open to evaluation and dividing by the number placed into employment within that month.

**Retention:** The Retention Rate will be measured by matching all open evaluations with the Unemployment Insurance (UI) wage file the second quarter after placement.

We will also report and analyze:

- Number referred
- Number enrolled
- % Of county/district caseload served by an agency
- Number actively attending
- Enrolled but no longer attending
- Completed (quarterly/annually)

- Number placed 1 quarter after completion
- Number placed 3 quarters after completion
- Number placed 1 quarter after completion with 36 or more countable months.

## **Adult Education Outcomes**

Adult Education participants will be measured within nine months of the Adult Education class by pulling data to determine the number who have progressed to the next AE level and the number who have obtained their GED. The measure for adult education will be progress and GED completion rate. The following data will be collected to determine the level of performance:

- Number referred
- Number enrolled
- Number in AE level at least 9 months
- Number in AE level at least 9 months and successfully progressed to next level
- Number taking GED exam
- Number passed GED exam

## **Family Services Counseling Outcomes**

FSC cases will be measured one month after closure for successful participation in Families First activities or employment. Successful completion will be determined by the information indicated on the FSC Feedback Form. The following data will be collected to determine the level of performance:

- Number referred
- Number assessed
- Number enrolled in Families First activity 1 month after completion
- Number employed 1 month after completion
- Number of conciliations 1 month after completion

These measures will be calculated with fiscal year 2003-2004 being the baseline year. Each subsequent year, contractors will negotiate performance capabilities during the contract negotiations that will be based on the baseline year performance levels.

## COMMUNITY SERVICE OR WORK EXPERIENCE PROGRAMS

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### Community Service Programs

This component includes programs such as AmeriCorps, Job Corp, and VISTA. The hours participants spend in these programs will count toward the 40-hour work requirement. If the position is considered full-time by the organization and is 35 hours or more per week, this will satisfy the full-time work requirement until the 54<sup>th</sup> month in the participant's lifetime count. At that point, the STEPS procedures will be implemented. (For details on the STEPS policy, refer to the Work Requirements Chapter in the Families First Policy Guidebook.

AmeriCorps is a National and Community Service program which provides an individual with an education award of \$4,725.00 per year of completed national service. The award can be used to pay for college or to pay back student loans. There are three programs encompassed in AmeriCorps:

- AmeriCorps\*USA for participants age 17 and over
- AmeriCorps\*VISTA for participants age 18 and over
- AmeriCorps\*NCCC for participants age 16 to 24

Payments provided to AmeriCorps participants include a living allowance which is treated as earned income for the Families First program eligibility determination and a child care allowance. Only AmeriCorps participants receive the education award but some of the other programs available through National and Community Service provide "stipend" benefits to participants. For more information concerning the programs offered by the National and Community Service program in Tennessee, contact [www.state.tn.us/finance/rds/tcnscs.htm](http://www.state.tn.us/finance/rds/tcnscs.htm).

### Work Experience

This activity is an unpaid work experience in a public or not-for-profit agency that provides supervision in a real work environment. This activity is used when all other efforts to find the individual paid employment have been unsuccessful. It may be assigned for a period of up to six months. This is not a lifetime limit, but the PRP must be renegotiated at six months and another component pursued prior to returning to Work Experience. This activity hours will range from one to 40 hours a week, depending on the need for structured work experience.

The purpose of Work Experience is to improve the employability of an individual who is not otherwise able to obtain employment. It is unpaid job training at a clearly defined, well-supervised worksite. The participant should have the opportunity to:

- Develop basic work habits;
- Learn new skills; practice skills already learned in Families First;
- Acquire on-the-job experience;
- Demonstrated skills and work habits to prospective employers;
- Improve interpersonal skills;
- Learn to follow directions and take supervision;
- Learn team work and cooperation on the job; and
- Have an on-the-job mentor as a role model and support person.

## DHS RESPONSIBILITIES

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### Overview

DHS responsibilities are listed to enable contract staff to be aware of the expectations of DHS and the Families First participant when this individual is placed in a work experience activity. DHS must:

- Provide support services and child care as needed by the participant;
- Screen work site participants according to the wishes and needs of work site providers;
- Furnish the work site provider with reporting requirements and forms;
- Immediately notify the work site of any change which affects the participant's placement;
- Monitor work site placements, compliance by the participant, and the work site's attitude about the placement; and
- Maintain the participant's confidentiality.

### Participant Work Experience Agreements

Each participant who enters a Work Experience component is required to sign a Work Experience Participant Agreement. This document specifies the position, the days and hours that the participant agrees to be at the worksite, the duration of the assignment, and the form specifying what DHS agrees to do. A copy of the agreement goes to the participant and the worksite employer. A copy of this form can be obtained from the local DHS office.

### Work Site Employers

All six requirements of the US Department of Labor and Workforce Development's six-point test for Work Experience and Community Services must be met. These points are:

1. Training is similar to that given in a vocational school.
2. Training is for the benefit of the trainees.
3. Trainees do not displace regular employees.
4. Employers derive no immediate advantage from trainees' activities.
5. Trainees are not entitled to a job after training is completed.
6. Employers and trainees understand that the trainee is not paid.

**NOTE:** *DHS Area Managers will use the U.S. DOL six-point test to ensure the placement meets FLSA standards. In the event contract agencies were involved in a work experience activity, the DHS Area Manager must give approval for the placement.*

If the trainee produces work and the employer realizes a benefit, then the trainee must be paid the minimum wage. This means the participant must be receiving training and practicing the skills under the direct and immediate supervision of the organization's staff. This means that the organization cannot leave the Families First participant to do the job tasks alone or independently.

A Families First Work Experience participant cannot displace a regular employee, even temporarily. For example, a FF participant cannot fill in for a regular employee on a day off, during a break, etc.

In addition, the FF participant cannot perform tasks for the employer that the employer would otherwise pay an employee for doing.

The training that a FF participant receives must be comparable to the type of training that the participant would receive in a training institute or comparable facility. For Families First purposes, all Work Experience sites must be at a non-profit agency or government site. In addition, no Families First (TANF) money may be used to subsidize work experience wages, per our state law.

## **Liability**

All participants are covered by Medicaid and would qualify for medical treatment with their Medicaid MCO. When participants are working on state property and experience an injury that results in a claim not covered by Medicaid, a claim may be filed with the State Board of Claims, if it meets the conditions for such a claim. When the participants are working at a local government agency or not-for-profit agency, the agency's insurance must cover any claims not covered by Medicaid.

## **FAMILY SERVICES COUNSELING**

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### **Purpose**

Studies indicate that long-term welfare families face severe, persistent and multiple barriers to self-sufficiency. The Family Services Counseling program was designed and implemented as a work component of the Families First program to identify and address barriers to self-sufficiency in the areas of:

- mental health,
- domestic violence,
- substance abuse,
- learning disabilities, and/or
- children's health/behavioral health.

### **Mission**

In support of the mission of DHS, the Family Services Counseling program is dedicated to providing a respectful, client-driven, strengths-based approach to assisting FF clients develop solutions that allow them to achieve and maintain self-sufficiency and improve the overall quality of their lives.

### **Goal**

The long-term goal of Family Services Counseling is to improve work, education and/or training performance so that the participant is able to achieve self-sufficiency.

### **Scope**

The services offered in this work component include comprehensive screening and assessment, short-term counseling services, intensive case management, referral, and advocacy for eligible Families First participants and their families who have been identified as having barriers which appear to be interfering with their ability to become self-sufficient. Masters level mental health professionals have been contracted to provide these services to Families First participants throughout the state. Services are community based in locations convenient to Families First clients, such as county DHS offices, other service provider locations, and in contract agencies. Family Services Counseling is not intended to duplicate services funded by TennCare or replace existing resources in the community.

### **Overview of FSC Philosophy**

The Department of Human Services Families First Program believes that Family Services Counseling interventions should be organized around clients' resources, perceptions, experiences, and ideas. Additionally, a key aspect of the service planning process is to define the strengths clients already possess that will enable them to take advantage of the treatment available. While diagnosis may be important in some mental health practices, the FSC counselor will not diagnose clients.



## ***Philosophy***

- Family Services Counselors view clients as capable and willing, not pathological and resistant.
- Family Services Counselors believe that people are naturally cooperative if approached the right way and treated as resourceful and competent.
- Family Services Counselors emphasize client strengths and solutions.
- Family Services Counselors emphasize respect and collaboration as well as effectiveness and results.
- Family Services Counselors view clients as experts on their concerns, problems, goals and responses to counseling.
- Family Services Counselors use these beliefs to evoke solutions, spiritual and personal resources, strengths, competence, and exceptions to the usual rule of the problem.

## ***Guiding Principles***

Family Services Counselors:

- Acknowledge and validate clients' reality and experience, focusing on aspects which support the goal of attaining self-sufficiency.
- Guide clients to shift how they view things (perceptions of the problem) and/or do things (patterns that support or create the problem).
- Tap their resources, expertise, and experiences for solutions and consult them on their preferences on the process and direction of counseling.

## ***Deciding Upon the Focus of Counseling***

- Counseling is structured around those client goals and expectations which can be adequately addressed in a brief-therapy format.
- If upon observation or assessment, a Family Services Counselor discovers something else which may be a contributing factor or issue, that issue may be suggested to the client as a possible barrier, but it is the client who must decide the priority of issues to be the focus of the short-term counseling.

**FSC counselors work with clients to negotiate the best route towards reaching the clients' goals.**

## **Family Services Counseling Team**

The Department of Human Services has contracted with agencies across the state for Masters level mental health professionals called FSC Counselors to provide Family Services Counseling to Families First clients. Each county in the state is provided services by a Family Services Counselor. Clinical supervision for the FSC Counselors is provided by the contracting agency.

Refer to the section on Counselor Roles for information regarding staff qualification requirements and the waiver policy pertaining to those requirements.

## ***Family Services Counselors***

An essential aspect of the Family Services Counseling program is its easy accessibility for Families First clients. Therefore, counselors will be located in county DHS offices, in other Families First service provider locations, or at FSC contract agencies to which Families First clients regularly come. Every client will have impartial access to Family Services Counseling regardless of race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, age or disability.

At the time of hire, the FSC Counselor will be assigned to a specific county office by the contract agency, based on the input from the DHS District Administrative Director or his/her representative. The DHS county office is responsible for providing confidential office space or interviewing space for FSC Counselors in the county office. FSC Counselors will be available to FF clients, DHS caseworkers, and other Families First service providers Monday through Friday from 8:00 am to 4:30 pm, unless otherwise scheduled in response to client needs. FSC Counselors will provide a weekly calendar and contact numbers to the DHS office for accountability purposes and to ensure that the Counselor is accessible in case of an emergency. Home visits will be conducted when clinically indicated, such as when FSC Counselors determine situations exist in the family and/or home environment that could be interfering with the client's progress, or as an accommodation due to the disability or other condition of the client.

Some FSC Counselors will serve more than one county. In these situations, the FSC Counselors, in collaboration with the DHS Area Managers, FSC Supervisor and other appropriate DHS District staff will monitor and review FSC program activity to ensure that all counties receive adequate coverage and services. Counselors serving multiple counties will be available in the smaller counties, at a minimum, on a biweekly basis. (This may require spending one half to one full day in a very small county and additional days in the larger counties.) The volume and reasons for referrals will determine the amount of time scheduled for each county.

FSC Counselors must be available to DHS Family Assistance staff in the county offices for assistance in accommodating clients who may have mental health conditions that require professional interventions. DHS staff should turn first to the DHS Area Manager or DHS Field Supervisor for assistance in a difficult situation. However, if these staff members are unavailable or are unsuccessful with the client, the FSC Counselor should become involved. In the event the FSC Counselor is unavailable, the local Mobile Crisis Team should be contacted and their presence requested to assess the situation. When the FSC Counselor is available, he/she should assess the situation. If the client is threatening harm to himself or herself or someone else, the FSC Counselor will call the local Mobile Crisis team if it has not already been called and remain with the client until they arrive. The FSC Counselor should attempt to contact the client's mental health manager or other mental health service provider if one is assigned and known.

## ***Family Services Counselor Conduct***

The FSC Counselor's primary responsibility is to the client. The counselor will make every reasonable effort to advance the welfare and best interests of the Families First client and his/her family, including respecting the rights of those individuals seeking assistance and making reasonable efforts to ensure that FSC services are used appropriately.

Unprofessional conduct is prohibited. Unprofessional conduct includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- Exploiting relationships with clients for personal or financial advantages.

- Using any confidence of a client to the client's disadvantage.
- Participating in dual relationships with clients, which could impair the counselor's professional judgment, such as business or close personal relationships.
- Engaging in sexual activities or sexual advances with any client or family member.
- Practicing while under the influence of alcohol or other drugs not prescribed by a licensed physician.
- Accepting a fee or anything of value for providing services or making or receiving a referral.

The Tennessee Department of Human Services is dedicated to maintaining high standards of professional competence and integrity. Any counselor who:

- is convicted of a felony;
- is convicted of a misdemeanor related to their qualifications or functions;
- is engaged in conduct which could lead to conviction of felonies or misdemeanors related to their qualifications or function;
- is expelled from other professional organizations for ethical violations;
- has their license(s) or certification(s) suspended or revoked;
- is no longer competent to practice counseling due to impairment from physical or mental causes or the abuse of alcohol or other drugs;
- disregards established DHS, FSC, or contract agency regulations covered in the Families First Services Contractor Policy and Procedure Manual;
- engages in unprofessional conduct;
- fails to cooperate with the department at any stage of an investigation of an ethical complaint of his/her conduct by DHS or contractor management;

May be subject to termination from working on the FSC contract.

### ***Monthly Reports***

Each Family Services Counseling contract agency will submit a monthly report to the FSC Director and the Family Assistance Director of that District no later than the 5<sup>th</sup> of the month (following the reporting month) with the following information:

- a. Number of referrals (by counselor and county) received during the reporting month.
- b. Number of assessments conducted during the reporting month.
- c. Total Current Caseload on the last day of the reporting month (by counselor and county). This number should equal the previous month's total caseload plus the number of referrals for the current month (a) minus the number of closures in the current month (f).
- d. Success stories.

### **Confidentiality**

Confidentiality regarding participation and the conditions of treatment is considered a basic element of health care delivery and of the provider-client relationship. Information shared with the FSC counselor is held in the strictest confidence and will not be disclosed unless the participant gives written consent. The only exceptions to this are threat of suicide or homicide or suspicion/knowledge of child abuse.

If information is to be disclosed to DHS or any other person, agency, organization or source, a Consent to Release Confidential Information form must be completed and signed by the client for

each person, agency, organization or source to whom disclosure is needed. The client will be informed about the purpose for the disclosure, what information will be disclosed, to whom the information is to be disclosed and when the consent will expire (no more than 6 months from the date the consent is signed.) *Under no circumstance will clients be asked to sign “blank” consent forms.* All FSC Consent to Release Information forms will be filed in the third section of the client’s FSC file.

### ***Informed Consent***

All Families First clients seeking FSC services will be given information, in language s/he understands, about services provided by the FSC Counselor, requirements for FSC program participation, the credentials of the counselor, and potential benefits or risks of participation in FSC so that s/he may give informed consent for services.

**Family Services Counseling cannot be provided to a client who will not sign the Informed Consent form.** The purpose of the Informed Consent form is to provide documentation that the FSC Counselor has obtained fully informed and voluntary consent to the assessment and subsequent services. At the time of the first session, the FSC Counselor will explain the purpose of the assessment and time-limited services available as a participant in Family Services Counseling. The FSC Counselor will read and explain each aspect of the Informed Consent form in terms that the client can understand. Verification that the client understands the program and requirements will be obtained by having the client sign and date the Informed Consent form prior to starting the assessment process.

If the participant refuses to sign the Informed Consent form, the FSC Counselor will notify the caseworker about the refusal. The caseworker will then contact the individual to renegotiate the Personal Responsibility Plan (PRP) and remove Family Services Counseling assessment as an activity. This is not a sanction situation.

Upon receipt of a referral and prior to contacting and/or assessing a client, the FSC counselor may talk to the referral source to obtain or exchange information pertaining to the client’s needs without written consent. If a client self-refers to the FSC program without going through the caseworker, the FSC counselor may not disclose any confidential information without the written consent of the client. It will be reported to the caseworker that a self-referral to FSC was made by that individual (see Referrals for Family Services Counseling).

Once the assessment process has been initiated, confidentiality must be maintained in accordance with applicable state and federal laws, unless appropriate releases to disclose information are signed by the client. It is important to be sensitive to information which has no impact on benefit eligibility that may be documented in the client’s ACCENT case record. To further maintain confidentiality, FSC activities should be referred to in terms of “FSC hours” only on the Feedback form and PRP.

Suspicion or knowledge of child abuse must be reported in the state of Tennessee. If an FSC Counselor suspects child abuse or neglect, the FSC counselor has a responsibility to report this information to the appropriate authorities i.e. TN Department of Children’s Services.

If a client is in danger of harming him/herself, disclosure of such information may be made to the appropriate medical authorities i.e. Mobile Crisis Team. The client will be informed of the intent to disclose this information. If a client threatens to harm a third party, the FSC personnel may warn the possibly endangered third party i.e. the party to whom the client threatens harm. Such a warning is

required if the client has identified a potential victim, if there is a feasible plan to cause harm, and if, in the judgment of the counselor, the person has a clear intent to act according to the plan. FSC personnel will inform the client of the intent to inform.

## **Eligibility for Family Services Counseling**

Families First clients and members of their assistance group who have an active case as well as clients who have received cash assistance in the past 12 months, (extended FSC) are eligible for Family Services Counseling. Child only cases and non-eligible adults are **not** eligible for Family Services Counseling. Individuals who do not have a work requirement are not eligible to volunteer for FSC Services. See definition of “volunteers” that follows.

### ***Collaborating with DHS Caseworkers***

The FSC counselor is responsible for developing collaborative relationships with DHS caseworkers in order to best help the client achieve self-sufficiency.

The DHS Caseworker is in a unique position to provide prevention and early intervention services by referring to FSC FF clients who are having difficulty following their personal responsibility plan (PRP). The DHS caseworker is ultimately responsible for the determination of the eligibility and the development of the Personal Responsibility Plan.

He/she must strictly abide by policy and procedures for case documentation of all actions and referrals pertaining to eligibility and an accurate time limit count.

The FSC counselor is responsible for communicating recommendations for any changes to the PRP, time limits or sanction procedures to the caseworker in writing on an FSC Feedback Form. If the FSC Counselor recommends that changes be made to the PRP, or time limits and/or sanction procedures to accommodate the client who has barriers identified, the caseworker must be given adequate information so that s/he can offer the adjustments to the client. Any such modifications recommended may only be made when in compliance with Families First policy. The caseworker is responsible for notifying the FSC counselor of any incidents of noncompliance in standard Families First work components included on the client’s PRP in order for the FSC counselor to work with the client to overcome any barriers that may be contributing to noncompliance.

While the caseworker knows of a client’s involvement with FSC, they will not know the specifics of what kind of services are being provided. In situations where an incapacity determination is needed, the client may wish to sign a release of information so the FSC counselor can share pertinent information with the caseworker. The caseworker must gather medical records from the participant to be used in the incapacity determination process. The FSC counselor can be of great assistance to the caseworker in obtaining these records. The FSC counselor is responsible for ensuring a team effort on behalf of the client while maintaining confidentiality.

## Definitions

Active: Families First participants and their assistance group members who are currently receiving cash assistance.

Extended FSC: Families First participants and their assistance group members who have received cash assistance within the past twelve months. To be eligible, the client must be a resident of TN and have care and control of his/her children. Note: There are transitional child care and Medicaid benefits available after cash case closure. It is possible for the participant to be ineligible for transitional benefits but eligible for extended FSC and vice-versa (transitional Medicaid for child-only cases.) However, child only cases are not eligible for extended FSC.

Child Only Cases: Child only cases are those where the caretaker is not in the assistance group.

Volunteers: Individuals who are exempt or interrupted from the work requirement due to any of the following reasons **cannot** volunteer to participate in FSC:

- Being a caretaker over 60 years of age and unemployed;
- Disabled caretaker;
- Caring for an in-home disabled relative;

Individuals who are fulfilling the work requirement **can** volunteer for FSC and cannot be sanctioned for non-compliance with FSC. Individuals who are applying for SSI or SSA and are exempted from the work requirement can volunteer for FSC to gain assistance in applying for SSI/SSA.

Note: Disqualified individuals, ineligible aliens, some drug felons, and fleeing felons do not receive cash assistance but can participate in Family Services Counseling. These participants have a work plan requirement although they are technically ineligible; therefore, they qualify for FF services.

The DHS caseworker will verify FSC eligibility to the program prior to referring a client to FSC. If a client self-refers directly to FSC, the counselor will verify FSC eligibility with a caseworker before initiating services. An individual who is eligible for extended FSC may request services from the FSC counselor. The FSC counselor is responsible for obtaining verification of eligibility for extended FSC participants in writing from the DHS caseworker before initiating FSC services.

## Referrals for Family Services Counseling

Except in cases of emergency or self-referral, all referrals to the FSC program will originate with the DHS caseworker. The need for a referral may be identified by a variety of sources in addition to the caseworker, such as other Families First service providers, home health professionals or self-referrals by the client. However, all referrals will flow through the DHS caseworker to ensure that the client's PRP reflects FSC assessment.

If a client self-refers, the FSC counselor will immediately contact the caseworker to notify him/her of the self-referral and request that the caseworker meet with the client to renegotiate the PRP and then complete the standard referral form for FSC assessment. If a Families First service provider identifies the need for a referral for FSC to the caseworker, the caseworker will contact the client to explain Family Services Counseling and to determine if he/she wants to renegotiate the PRP to include FSC assessment. A referral will be sent to the FSC counselor only if the client agrees to the referral. If an emergency arises, a Families First provider can contact the FSC counselor directly to make a referral for Family Services Counseling. In this case, the FSC counselor will explain Family Services Counseling and the referral process to the client. If the client wants a referral for FSC, the FSC counselor will assist the client in contacting the caseworker to initiate the referral process.

A client's Families First time limit count will not stop for FSC assessment until the PRP has been changed to include FSC assessment, and if the client has not had a referral to FSC in the previous 12 months.

When making a referral to FSC, the DHS caseworker will use the standard DHS form for referral to work activities and services.

### ***Multiple Referrals***

A client may be referred to Family Services Counseling as frequently as needed while receiving Families First assistance. A comprehensive assessment using the Family Services Counseling Assessment form will be conducted at the time of the initial referral or a subsequent referral occurring more than twelve (12) months after the initial referral. An assessment update will be completed with each subsequent referral occurring within a twelve (12) month period of the initial referral. The client's record from the previous enrollment will be reopened. A divider will be placed in the record to separate the current enrollment from previous enrollment(s) with the most recent record on top.

Informed Consent and Consents to Release Information must be explained and signed each time a client is referred as a Consent to Release Information is valid only for the reasons and the time-frame specified on the release when first signed. A Consent to Release Information must include an expiration date no longer than 6 months from the date it is signed.

The referral is then handled the same way as the initial referral.

### ***Referral Priorities***

When the number of referrals to Family Services Counseling exceeds the capacity of the program to provide services, in order to serve those in greatest need of Family Services Counseling first, the following levels of priority will be applied:

Emergency Situations - Priority for referral and treatment will be given to anyone who may be in danger or at risk of harming him/herself or someone else. If an individual is determined to be at risk to self or others, community emergency or crisis personnel e.g. Mobile Crisis Team should be called for immediate evaluation. Every effort should be made by the FSC counselor to assess a person who is in this type of danger on the same day that the situation is known or once the individual has been stabilized.

Non-Compliance With Work Requirement - When clients who are non-compliant with their PRP agree to have FSC Assessment as part of their two-week compliance, if the assessment and/or other

Family Services Counseling activities are not available when the two-week compliance is to begin, these recipients and applicants will not be required to go into another component to show compliance although the client can opt for another activity. **The swiftest possible service delivery to this group is important because the compliance period will not begin until Family Services Counseling is available.**

### ***Alcohol and Drug Treatment***

If an individual informs his/her caseworker that he/she has entered a drug and alcohol treatment program, the caseworker will offer an FSC referral so that the PRP can be modified (to include the treatment as an FSC activity) without interrupting the treatment. If the client accepts the referral to FSC, the caseworker will complete a referral form, refer the client to FSC for assessment, and interrupt the time limit for one month. Within two weeks of receiving the referral on a client who has self-initiated treatment, the FSC counselor will report to the caseworker (via the FSC Feedback form) the status of the FSC Assessment and the number of hours in self-initiated treatment, and may make other recommendations regarding adjustments to the PRP and time limits, if needed. In this case, modifications to the PRP and interruption of the time limit can be made only if the client accepts and participates in the referral to the FSC counselor. If the client wishes to have any of the treatment hours count toward the work requirement, the client must cooperate with the FSC counselor in monitoring the treatment process. The client will not be required to do additional FSC hours above those needed for the self-initiated treatment. The hours spent in self-initiated treatment or counseling will be referred to as “Family Services Counseling” on the PRP. If additional non-FSC hours are needed for the client’s work plan, the FSC counselor will follow through with the client and the caseworker as with other FSC referrals.

If a client requests a referral for drug and alcohol treatment, or if the FSC counselor and client determine during the assessment process that drug and alcohol treatment is indicated, the FSC counselor will facilitate a referral to a program which accepts TENNCARE payment. The FSC counselor will then complete an FSC Feedback Form showing the number of hours required for participation in treatment as FSC hours and send to the DHS caseworker. Modifications to the PRP or interruption of the time limit will be facilitated by the FSC counselor in a manner that will best preserve the confidentiality of the client.

Upon receipt of the referral to FSC for the client who self-initiates treatment or when the FSC counselor facilitates the client’s referral to treatment, the FSC counselor will contact the treatment provider and request that the provider obtain a Consent to Release Confidential Information from the client so that the provider may share information with the FSC counselor about the client’s treatment plan (including but not limited to: date of admission to treatment, estimated length of stay, number of hours per week in treatment, estimated date of discharge, aftercare recommendations, and notification of disciplinary discharge or termination of treatment AMA) in order for the FSC counselor to make recommendations to the caseworker regarding the PRP. When the FSC assessment has not been completed, if the client is in a residential program, the assessment can be deferred until the client is transferred to a lesser level of care. If the client is in an out-patient program, the FSC assessment can be completed concurrently with the treatment.



## ***Domestic Violence***

If a client informs his/her caseworker that he/she has initiated a safety plan to escape domestic violence, the caseworker will change the PRP, interrupt the time limit and offer the client a referral to Family Services Counseling. Families First allows for special exceptions in domestic violence cases; therefore, when the client has entered a domestic violence shelter he/she does not have to accept the FSC referral in order to have the PRP changed and time limit interrupted. If the client informs the FSC counselor that he/she has initiated a safety plan, the FSC counselor will immediately assess with the client his/her safety and then inform the caseworker of the situation.

Safety is the number one priority in these circumstances. The FSC counselor and caseworker will do everything possible to facilitate the client's safety. If the client accepts the referral to Family Services Counseling, the FSC counselor will not change the client's safety plan. The FSC counselor will assess the client's situation with him/her to determine if there are other services that are needed. If other services are indicated, the FSC counselor will make recommendations to the caseworker regarding adjustments to the PRP, if needed. Information pertaining to the whereabouts of a client in the case of domestic violence will not be kept in the FSC case record. The hours on the PRP will be referred to as "Family Services Counseling." If additional non-FSC hours are indicated and agreed to by the client, the FSC counselor and caseworker will ensure that the client's safety needs are addressed and accommodated.

## ***Incapacity Evaluation***

If the FSC counselor suspects illness or an impairment (mental or physical) which substantially reduces the parent's ability to either provide financial support for the child or to provide for the child's day to day physical care or guidance, then s/he will refer the client to the caseworker for determination of incapacity and to Vocational Rehabilitation Services if indicated. If through the assessment, the FSC counselor suspects or learns that the individual may have a disability or an incapacitating condition, the counselor will refer the client to the caseworker with a Category C outcome typically (based on the severity of the barriers) so that the option of an incapacity determination can be discussed with the participant. If the participant chooses to have an incapacity determination they may come back to FSC as a Category D and receive help through the SSA/SSI process. If the participant does not choose an incapacity determination then they may be served as a Category C provided there are FSC barriers identified through the assessment. They may still receive help with the SSA/SSI process as part of the entirety of the FSC plan. These individuals will require monthly contact but no justification on the progress notes for time-count stoppage.

The time count can be interrupted while waiting for a SSA/SSI determination only if:

- The individual is also waiting for an incapacity determination decision;

While incapacity can be approved at the county level, the county cannot automatically approve incapacity based solely on the FSC counselor's referral for incapacity determination. Instead, the county must follow standard procedures to either approve the incapacity on a local county level or to refer to the MEU. The FSC counselor may determine that Rehabilitation Services is an appropriate referral. The FSC counselor will contact the caseworker about renegotiating the PRP with the client in order to make a referral to Rehabilitation Services. Rehabilitation Services can help many participants with barriers obtain the training needed to find success in the workplace. A person who

is referred to Rehabilitation Services can also get a referral to Family Services Counseling at the same time or whenever the referral is needed.

## **FSC Assessment**

**An assessment will be scheduled and completed by the FSC Counselor within two weeks of the date of a referral.** When a client is referred to Family Services Counseling, the caseworker will renegotiate the client's Personal Responsibility Plan (PRP) to reflect the Family Services Counseling Assessment and interrupt the time limit for one month. When the client has been referred for assessment in the past 12 months, the time count will not be stopped. If a participant self-refers to Family Services Counseling, the time limit will be interrupted if indicated at the time the PRP is renegotiated with the caseworker to change/add FSC assessment to the PRP. Although participation in FSC is voluntary, once the FSC assessment is on the PRP, the client must comply with the assessment process or he/she may be subject to sanctioning procedures.

After receiving a referral, the FSC counselor (or caseworker, if a central FSC assessment appointment book is being used) will schedule an appointment with the client to assess whether or not barriers to self-sufficiency exist and how these may be affecting the client's participation in Families First. During the assessment period, no other work activities are required of the participant.

If the caseworker makes an assessment appointment for the client at the time the PRP is renegotiated and the client does not show for the appointment, the FSC counselor will notify the caseworker of the "no show" on an Initial Feedback Form. (The client is told by the caseworker that compliance with the assessment is mandatory.) During the assessment process, once an appointment is set with the client, it is the client's responsibility to comply; the FSC counselor does not need to contact the client if the client does not show for the appointment. The FSC counselor will notify the caseworker (via the FSC Initial Feedback Form) that the client did not show for the appointment. If the FSC counselor is responsible for making the assessment appointment, he/she will attempt to contact the client a minimum of four times within the two-week assessment period to constitute reasonable effort. These attempts will consist of at least one letter and three phone calls, two of which will be made after normal business hours. If the client does not respond to these attempts, the FSC counselor will send an Initial Feedback Form to the caseworker indicating noncompliance. Once a Feedback form is sent to the caseworker indicating non-compliance, the case will remain open until the conciliation process is completed. The caseworker will send a FF Change to FSC Form indicating the result of the conciliation process. At this point the counselor fills out a Change Feedback indicating the disposition of the client after conciliation.

## ***Assessment Outcomes***

Upon completion of the assessment process, the FSC counselor will determine the outcome category based on barriers (if any) identified, severity of barriers and type of services needed. An assessment form is provided to perform the assessment process with the client. The questions should be read to the client and the client's response recorded on the form.

Upon completion of the assessment process, the FSC counselor will complete the Initial Feedback Form and indicate the appropriate outcome category A, B, C or D. The outcome category will impact the renegotiation of the client's PRP. The category outcomes are determined by completing the assessment. Category D is the only category that may be applied to an individual without the assessment. If the caseworker refers the participant for help with the SSI/SSA process and the

participant is already exempt then category D can be assigned without the assessment. A monthly contact with the participant is required but no justification note for the time-limit stoppage.

- Category A indicates that no barriers were identified and the client will not receive Family Services Counseling. Refer the client to the caseworker to renegotiate the PRP.
- Category B indicates that slight barriers were found and the client will receive Family Services Counseling. The client in this category will have a traditional work plan (typically 20 or 40 hours per week).
- Category C indicates that major barriers were found that require modifications to the total number of hours on the PRP, modified sanction procedures, time limit interruptions and/or modified activities.
- Category D indicates that severe barriers were found and that the participant has either chosen to have an incapacity determination or has already been determined to be either Disabled or Incapacitated, and as such, has been exempted or interrupted from time limits and work requirements.

Family Services Counseling is a time-limited FF component. The FSC counselor may interrupt a time count for up to three months after the assessment month in any twelve-month period. Modification of a PRP to include fewer than 30 hours of work activities other than FSC is limited to three months after the assessment month in any twelve-month period. A work plan for a participant placed in Category B, may have more than 10 FSC hours for up to three months after the assessment month in any twelve-month period. When any of the modifications described above apply to a participant's time count or work plan, the FSC counselor must review the case with his/her supervisor every month to determine the need for a continuation of the modification up to the three-month limit. If a continuance is clinically indicated, it should be noted with reasons on a separate progress note and should not exceed three months in any twelve-month period.

### ***Assessment Categories A and B***

Clients who meet the criteria for assessment outcome category A or B will have a Traditional Work Plan. The most usual Traditional Work Plan consists of a 40-hour work requirement. The Traditional Work Plan consists of a 20-hour requirement if a client tests below the 9<sup>th</sup> grade reading or math level and chooses to participate in Adult Education as a work component. If the client meets the criteria for assessment outcome category "A", then he/she will have a Traditional Work Plan with no FSC counseling activities. If the client meets the criteria for assessment outcome category "B", then he/she will also have a Traditional Work Plan but some of his/her work component hours will be FSC counseling activities. FSC hours are counted first towards the 40 or 20 hour requirement. An example of a Traditional Work Plan with FSC hours may be 37 standard component hours and 3 hours FSC counseling. A Work Plan cannot exceed 40 hours. However, a client may voluntarily exceed the 40 hours.

For clients who test below the 9<sup>th</sup> grade reading or math level and choose to participate in AE, the Work Plan cannot exceed 20 hours *even if it includes FSC counseling hours*. An example of a Traditional Work Plan for a client who meets these criteria is 18 hours of AE and 2 hours FSC

counseling. Standard time limits, work requirements, and sanctions apply to the Traditional Work Plan.

## ***Assessment Categories C and D***

### ***Modified Work Plan***

Clients who meet the criteria for assessment outcome category C or D always require a Modified Work Plan. A Modified Work Plan may have fewer hours, modified sanction procedures, time limit interruptions, or a combination of activities less than 40 or 20 hours, for up to three months in any twelve-month period, to assist the client in addressing his/her barriers. Clients who have significant or severe barriers (category C or D) require a Modified Work Plan. The FSC counselor is responsible for determining the number of hours, setting up any activities that are different from the standard work activities found in a Traditional Work Plan and monitoring these activities for compliance. If the FSC counselor recommends that the PRP and/or sanction procedures be modified, and/or the time limit be interrupted based on the individual's circumstances, he/she will notify the caseworker via the Feedback Form. These modifications will be based on the severity of the barrier(s) and the level and intensity of services required to accomplish the goals set by the client and the FSC counselor. The Modified Work Plan can include periods of time, not to exceed three months in any twelve-month period, when no activities are required at all due to the individual's circumstances. When this occurs, the FSC counselor will notify the caseworker to exempt the individual from the work requirement for the needed period of time.

For times when no activity at all is required, the time limit is also interrupted. When a modified PRP includes a total of 20 hours or less of activities, the time limit must be interrupted. For an individual with more than 20 hours of activities, the FSC counselor will determine if the time limit should be interrupted based on the specific circumstances of the individual. If the FSC counselor finds that the client is applying for Social Security or Supplemental Security Income the FSC counselor will refer the client back to the caseworker to discuss the option of pursuing incapacity. The Category outcome for this individual will be Category C if severe barriers are present.

### ***Sanction Modification***

For clients who meet the criteria for Assessment Outcome category C, the FSC counselor may recommend special sanction criteria, to be in effect for up to three months in any twelve-month period, for any or all components that are specific to the individual. (Example: AE has a 90% participation requirement, the FSC Counselor may lower that to 80%.) Based on the nature and severity of barriers identified, the FSC counselor and client determine what the compliance provisions will be. The FSC counselor will communicate any sanction modifications to the caseworker on a Feedback Form. (Example: One of the behaviors a participant who has a bipolar disorder may exhibit is not following through on plans she has made. The FSC counselor may allow non-compliance with a work requirement three times before asking the caseworker to start the formal sanctioning process. Instead of conciliation for these first three instances of non-compliance, the caseworker will inform the FSC counselor so that the failure to follow-through is addressed as part of treatment.) Once a case reaches conciliation, the FSC counselor may not alter the sanction process. Sanction modifications are only allowed prior to the point of conciliation.

### ***Time Limit Interruption***

Families First assistance groups have an eligibility time limit (18 months) and a grant payment time limit (60 months lifetime maximum). The 18 and 60-month time limits are maximum time limits. There are circumstances in which the time limit can be interrupted or the “clock stopped”. The following circumstances apply to Family Services Counseling. (See the Families First Handbook for information on additional circumstances in which a time limit can be interrupted.) A referral to the FSC counselor results in a one-month interruption to the time limit for assessment if the client has not had a referral within the last 12 months. Based on the assessment findings, the FSC counselor may recommend that the time limit be interrupted for up to three months after the assessment month in any twelve-month period. Time limits must be interrupted for individuals with a modified PRP that includes a total of 20 hours or less of activities. If an FSC counselor recommends modification of the PRP to 20 hours or less, time limit interruption must be indicated on the Feedback Form. For an individual with more than 20 hours of activities, the FSC counselor will determine if the time limit should be interrupted based on the individual circumstances of the participant e.g. the severity of barriers and the level and intensity of services provided. Clients who have time limit interruptions are still responsible for complying with their PRP unless they are exempt. The FSC counselor is responsible for communicating time count interruptions to the caseworker by using the Feedback Form. The FSC counselor is responsible for informing the caseworker of when the “clock” needs to be restarted. If an FSC activity is indicated but not available, the time count will be interrupted (failure to provide services) and may be restarted when the activity becomes available, if indicated. The FSC counselor may recommend continued interruption for up to three months within a twelve month period from the date of the referral based on barriers present. **When the time count is interrupted by the FSC counselor, the situation must be reviewed monthly by the counselor and his/her supervisor. If the time count continues to need interrupting, the clinical reasons for the interruption must be documented on a separate progress note. In all circumstances, however, time interruptions by the FSC counselor may not exceed three months within a twelve month period from the date of the referral.**

### ***Feedback to the Caseworker***

**An initial feedback will be filled out with disposition of the referral and delivered to the caseworker within two weeks of the referral date.** If the assessment has not been completed, then the counselor shall mark “assessment ongoing”. When the assessment has been completed, the initial feedback will indicate the findings of the assessment and the level of involvement (number of FSC hours on the PRP) in Family Services Counseling. Once the client has completed the assessment and enrolled in Family Services Counseling, any change in disposition of the case will be indicated with the Change Feedback. The Feedback form has a section for the FSC counselor to make recommendations about appropriate and inappropriate work components. When a client chooses a component, he/she must finish the component before renegotiating the PRP, except for special circumstances which are detailed in the Families First Policy Handbook. Therefore, FSC counselors need to use discretion when recommending work components.

## Transfer Policy

When a client moves out of the county the FSC counselor will close the FSC case. On the Change Feedback Form, the numbered option that allows closure for moving will be checked. The Change Feedback Form should be sent to the caseworker. When an FSC counselor receives a referral and discovers that the client was previously in FSC in another county, a new full assessment will be completed. The FSC counselor may have the client sign a Consent to Release of Information form which allows the new counselor to receive a copy of the assessment and other pertinent information (must be detailed on the release of information) from the FSC counselor in the former county.

## HIV Policy

Clients who present with high risk factors for HIV/AIDS will be offered a referral for screening. If, during the course of the assessment and/or treatment process, a client discloses information consistent with risk factors associated with HIV/AIDS, the FSC counselor will discuss the information and offer a referral for HIV/AIDS screening. Risk factors include, but are not limited to:

- Multiple sex partners,
- Sexually transmitted diseases (STDs)
- HIV positive sexual partners
- Intravenous drug use

**Due to the highly confidential nature of HIV information, any referral for HIV/AIDS screening will be documented in the record as a referral for medical evaluation only.**

## Compliance With FSC

The FSC counselor and the client will negotiate compliance expectations in FSC activities at the beginning of services. Noncompliance with FSC activities can result in sanctions as with other work components. If a client agrees to either FSC Assessment or FSC Counseling hours on their PRP, he/she must comply with FSC as with any other component or be subject to sanctioning procedures. Unlike other components, such as the 90% attendance rule for AE, there is no established level of compliance for FSC attendance or participation. Rules for compliance are established at the beginning of the FSC assessment process. The FSC counselor and the client will negotiate the expectations for participation in FSC activities based on individual circumstances, discuss what constitutes good cause for missing appointments, and set guidelines for when the counselor will consider the client out of compliance with Family Services Counseling. The FSC counselor will report a client's failure to comply with the agreed upon guidelines to the caseworker as non-compliance with FSC via the Feedback form. If a client who has a work requirement wants to stop participating in Family Services Counseling, he/she can contact his/her caseworker and renegotiate the PRP. The caseworker will also take appropriate measures to accommodate any known barriers to fulfilling the Traditional Work Plan, if needed. If the caseworker is notified by the FSC counselor that the participant has stopped participating in Family Services Counseling without requesting a renegotiation of the PRP, the caseworker will initiate regular conciliation and sanction procedures. If a child in the Families First assistance group is seeing a FSC counselor or receiving services through a provider set up through Family Services Counseling, no action is necessary if the child stops attending. If the child's involvement is tied to the adult's ability to work or participate in other activities, the FSC counselor will advise the caseworker on the action needed.

If the FSC Counselor is unable to contact the client for a period of one month, then the FSC case will be closed.

### ***Sanctions in FSC***

Sanctions are applied to a Families First assistance group when the assistance group has not complied with certain program requirements and good cause does not exist for the non-compliance. Sanctions are applied to Families First assistance groups for reasons defined in the Families First Policy Handbook which include the following:

- failure to cooperate with work or work activities as agreed to on the PRP (including FSC); voluntary termination of employment; failure to cooperate with Child Support;
- failure of the assistance group children and minor parent to attend school; and failure of the assistance group children to have immunizations and/or health checks.

Individuals can be subject to a sanction for non-compliance with Family Services Counseling, as is the case with other Families First work components. The FSC counselor is responsible for notifying the caseworker if a client is noncompliant with FSC hours or activities. If the caseworker is notified that an individual has failed to comply with a work component (including FSC), the caseworker must refer the case to CSR for a Conciliation process that allows the client opportunities to comply prior to applying sanctions.

Sanctions for work component non-compliance will result in the complete loss of cash assistance. On the first occurrence, sanctions will continue until the participant is in compliance. Sanctions for subsequent occurrences will continue until the adult serves the three-month sanction period or complies, whichever is greater. Before ineligibility, the closure action must be authorized by the Customer Service Review process. These regulations can be found in the Families First Policy Manual. Clients who are noncompliant with their work requirement must be offered a referral to Family Services Counseling to show compliance if they are not already in FSC. If the client agrees to the referral, the client must participate in the FSC Assessment or risk further sanctioning procedures. If the FSC Assessment outcome category is B or C, and the client accepts FSC services, the client's compliance requirement is met. If the non-compliance is with Family Services Counseling the client will be offered an opportunity to come back to FSC to come into compliance. In this case the client must comply with Family Services Counseling for two weeks to come into compliance.

If a client is referred to Family Services Counseling and there are no barriers to employment found, or if the participant does not choose to participate further with Family Services Counseling, the FSC counselor informs the caseworker via the FSC Feedback form. The participant must then agree to and comply with a standard two-week compliance period in order to come into compliance with Families First. In the case of volunteers no sanction or renegotiation action is taken for non-compliance with Family Services Counseling.

### **Documentation**

The Family Services Counselor will be responsible for documentation of the client's involvement with Family Services Counseling. The FSC counselor will document the referral, initial feedback and change feedback by placing copies of the completed forms in the first section of the client's chart. The completed assessment will be placed in the second section of the client's chart. When a

plan is developed with the client and activities for each FSC hour on the PRP are agreed upon, the FSC counselor will be responsible for the following:

- The entire record of a client's FSC involvement will be maintained by the FSC counselor working with that client.
- Direct counseling services provided by the FSC counselor will be documented in the Progress Notes and placed in the second section of the client's chart.
- If the client is assigned a Category C, the FSC counselor will monitor compliance with activities designated on the FSC plan by maintaining weekly contact with the client and/or auxiliary service provider and documenting participation, progress, and outcomes on the Contact Log in the third section of the client's chart.
- Completed Consent to Release Information forms for each service provider will be placed in the third section of the client's chart.

## **Psycho-educational Testing**

Psycho-educational testing to determine the existence of learning disabilities is available to FSC clients. Funding is provided through the contract agency. Each contract agency is responsible for developing referral arrangements with one or more qualified educational psychologists who are competent, capable, and willing to provide reports that will assist in developing detailed plans for accommodations in the education or work place, when needed. Since funding for psycho-educational testing is limited, each agency will have in place a mechanism for tracking the number of referrals for additional testing.

If a client answers "yes" to questions 68 and 71 on the assessment, the supplemental Learning Needs Screening will be conducted. These questions are:

68. Did you have any problems learning in elementary school, middle school or junior high school?
71. Were you in a special education or "resource" class at any point in school?

If the client scores 12 or higher on the Learning Needs Screening, or if additional information is gathered that indicates the possibility of a learning disability, the FSC counselor will discuss the option of additional psycho-educational testing with the client to determine more conclusively if a learning disability exists. If information is gathered during the assessment and/or treatment process that indicates possible significant mental impairment, the FSC counselor will discuss the option of additional psycho-educational testing with the client to determine more conclusively if significant mental impairment exists.

The FSC counselor will assist the client, when needed, in making the appointment for testing. The FSC counselor will provide the client with the name, address, directions and phone number of the psychologist (and date and time of appointment if counselor makes the appointment for the client).

If the client agrees to participate in further testing, the FSC counselor will obtain written consent to release information to the referral source on the FSC Consent to Release Confidential Information form. The FSC counselor will send the Learning Needs Screening and any additional information that may be beneficial to the psychologist and request that the psychologist forward the test report to the FSC. If the psychologist determines that the client qualifies for accommodations for GED testing (such as, un-timed testing), the psychologist should send an application for accommodation in GED testing along with the test report. Upon receipt of the report (and GED accommodation



application), the FSC will review (not interpret) the report with the client. If accommodations are indicated, the FSC will ask the client for consent to release the information to the caseworker, and the AE instructor, job-training instructor, or employer. If consent is provided, the FSC counselor will send a copy of the report (and GED accommodation to Adult Education instructor) to the appropriate source(s), and file the original in the client's record.

## **Advocacy**

Advocacy is an important role and is included in the scope of Family Services Counseling to assist the client in receiving the best and most appropriate services available.

Locating and accessing treatment and/or other services is a responsibility that FSC personnel will assume on behalf of the client. Additionally, issues that create barriers to a client accessing treatment and/or other services may need to be addressed before a client is able to participate in treatment or other services. One of the primary advocacy roles the FSC counselor will assume is that of helping caseworkers understand the special accommodations needed by the individual on the PRP in order for the client to progress toward self-sufficiency. Other advocacy roles may include working with employers to assist the client in arranging his/her work schedule to address safety issues (in the event of domestic violence) or to enable the client to participate in an outpatient treatment program. As an advocate, FSC personnel will solicit assistance from the local shelter and law enforcement authorities in situations where the client is in danger or when relocation is necessary to ensure safety.

## **Referrals to Community Providers**

Referrals to community providers will be utilized if additional assessment/evaluation and/or other services not provided by the FSC counselor are needed. If a referral is indicated, and the client agrees, a Consent to Release Information form will be completed and signed by the client prior to the disclosure of any information to a referral source or community provider. The FSC counselor will assist the client in following through with the referral, if needed by providing the client with the necessary referral information to include the agency name, address, contact person, and telephone numbers. All referrals to community providers will be documented on a Contact Log placed in the third section of the client's chart. If the client participates in other counseling or related activities that are included in the FSC hours on the PRP, the FSC counselor will monitor compliance with such activities by maintaining weekly contact with the service provider and documenting participation, progress and outcomes in the client's chart.

## **Utilization of Family Services Counselors When Serving TennCare Recipients**

This section outlines the procedures for accessing the Family Services Counselor for assistance in serving Family Assistance clients who may have mental health conditions that require professional accommodations. This situation may occur when those diagnosed as Severely and Persistently Mentally Ill (SPMI) and/or parents of children who have been diagnosed as Seriously Emotionally Disturbed (SED) come to the DHS office for appointments. If needed, a FSC Counselor may be scheduled to be present.

## Situations That May Require Family Services Counselor Involvement

- **When someone threatens to harm him/herself or someone else.** When this situation occurs, the Mobile Crisis team should always be called. All communities have access to a Mobile Crisis team. This team is available to come to a location upon request and provide crisis intervention. In addition, they can assess the person's need to be hospitalized. The phone number typically can be found in the white pages listed under Crisis Intervention.
- **When the client has major difficulties in communicating.** i.e. if someone is disoriented, having difficulty with the ability to communicate, hearing voices, seeing things that aren't there, talking to someone not present, or appears intoxicated or over-medicated;
- **When someone becomes agitated.** If the behavior is escalating such that the interview cannot be continued, the FSC Counselor may be able to calm the person and stabilize the situation.

## Procedures for Accessing the FSC Counselor

- When the front desk staff cannot communicate with the client due to this type of problem, or the caseworker is unable to continue the interview, the staff member should call the Field Supervisor and/or the Area Manager for assistance.
- If the FS1 or the Area Manager is unavailable or unable to calm the situation, s/he then may make the decision to involve the FSC Counselor.
- In the event the FSC Counselor is unavailable, the local Mobile Crisis team should be contacted and their presence requested to assess the situation. The caseworker should document in CLRC that the FSC Counselor or the Mobile Crisis team was asked to intervene.
- When the FSC Counselor is available, he/she will immediately assess the situation. If the client is threatening harm to themselves or someone else, the FSC Counselor will call the local Mobile Crisis team if it has not already been called and remain with the client until they arrive.
- If the client displays other inappropriate behaviors, the FSC Counselor will assess the situation and take appropriate action, which may mean that the Mobile Crisis team is called. It is the responsibility of the Mobile Crisis team to ask the client to contract for safety if deemed appropriate based on the team's assessment of the client. FSC and DHS personnel should not ask a client to contract for safety.
- When called to intervene, the FSC Counselor should attempt to contact the client's mental health case manager or other mental health service provider, if one is assigned and known.
- The FSC Counselor will address all other situations as deemed appropriate.

The Area Manager or designee will coordinate the dates the FSC Counselor will need to be present in the county office. Issues to consider would be number of appointments scheduled and potential problems that may arise.

The FSC Counselor will keep a monthly log of situations in which s/he is asked to intervene and how much time is devoted to each situation. This will be attached to the monthly report that is turned in to the FSC Supervisor. The FSC Counselor will also write a short description of his/her involvement with the client and take it to the FS1 assigned to the unit who will enter the statement in CLRC. The handwritten report should then be shredded.

## **Adult Education Referrals**

Individuals who test below 2.0 on the TABE will be offered a referral to FSC for further screening/testing to identify possible learning disabilities. If Adult Education is not on the participant's PRP, then FSC Assessment will follow the usual protocol. An assessment should be scheduled within two weeks of the referral date. If the participant indicates a positive response to either question 68 or 71 of the FSC Assessment, a Learning Needs Screening will be completed. If the participant scores above 12 on the Learning Needs Screening, a psycho-educational test will be offered to the participant. The FSC Counselor will explain that any psycho-educational test may, with the participant's signature of release, be shared with the next service provider in order for accommodations to be arranged for the participant.

Individuals who test below 9.0 on the TABE and have been in Adult Education for six months without making progress will be offered a referral to FSC for further screening/testing to identify possible learning disabilities. These individuals will have AE on the PRP and FSC Assessment as a 2 hour weekly activity. In these instances, the FSC should proceed with assessment as described above. However, if the assessment/screening indicates a need for psycho-educational testing, then the Initial Feedback should indicate "assessment ongoing" with no category assignment and 2 hours will be shown for the amount of FSC time on the PRP. If the FSC Assessment indicates barriers other than or along with possible learning disabilities, and the participant agrees to FSC, then the Initial Feedback should indicate the Outcome Category and the plan per usual FSC guidelines. If the assessment/screening indicates no need for further testing, and the participant either has no barriers or does not want FSC, then an Initial Feedback closing the referral should be completed.

The referral form will have FSC/AE box checked. The FSC Counselor should look at the TABE score and the PRP screen to determine if the individual also has AE on the PRP, and then follow the guidelines above.

## SUPPORT SERVICES

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### Overview

Support Services are intended to assist only those individuals who have an urgent unexpected situation that is preventing their full participation in an activity, preventing the acceptance of a bona fide offer of employment or jeopardizing their current employment. The elimination of barriers requires frequent assessment of the participant's status by DHS Caseworkers and other Families First service providers. The most common barriers are transportation and childcare. But other problems, such as poor vision and dental health may present significant barriers to program completion and self-sufficiency.

DHS Caseworkers will ensure that participants access all appropriate Support Services whenever there is a need, and that the participant meets certain eligibility criteria, the primary of which is that **the participant must have had sixty (60) days of satisfactory participation in a Families First component before referral for support services.** An exception can only be made with the approval of a District Program Supervisor.

If a client is participating in Vocational Rehabilitation, then VR services need to be explored before the authorization of Families First Support Services.

Standard Support Services include:

- Transportation Assistance
- Limited Vehicle Repairs
- Vehicle Related Expenses – vehicle registration, county taxes and Tennessee vehicle operator's license
- Dental Assistance
- Optical Assistance

Child Care Assistance, which is arranged by the Department of Human Services, is another support service given to Families First participants. The Families First Policy Handbook chapter concerning Childcare policies and processes is available at the local DHS office.

Standard Support Services are based on a 12-month period. If the client does not access the maximum allowable amount within 12 months, the remaining funds do not roll over to the client's next 12-month period. If a customer accesses any of the Standard Support Services, this does not preclude them from accessing other needed Support Services.

Work Related Support Services are available to assist those participants who have received a bona fide offer of employment and are ready to enter the workforce and transition to self-sufficiency. Families First participants may need assistance in obtaining one or more of the following Work Related Support Services to participate fully in employment:

- professional trade licenses
- certain medical test, inoculations and/or examinations required by the employer (and not provided by TennCare).

## State Office Approved Services

If a service that is not included in the lists above, but is specifically needed to insure continued program participation, Caseworkers should bring the issue to the attention of their supervisor and the District Office. The State office, after consultation with the District Office, may approve a one-time service to help the participant to gain self-sufficiency. Requests for approval of state office approved services should be sent to the Director of Families First Services.

Volunteers are eligible for support services. Individuals in the assistance group who are exempt from the work requirement may volunteer for a work activity. These volunteers are eligible for support services.

A referral from the DHS Caseworker is required for all support services. The Employment Career Specialist or other contract employee cannot sign the referral. Files must have documentation to support the authorization of services. A copy of the revised Support Services Referral form can be found in *Appendix H*.

Referrals cannot be “open ended”. A Support Services referral is to address an immediate need. Therefore, due to the urgency of the circumstances, it is required that the participant initiate use of the support service within 60 days from the date of the referral. **Services are considered initiated when the participant schedules an appointment with the vendor that will be providing the service.** For example: Broker and/or client scheduled a dental appointment. The appointment date is beyond the 60 days. If the appointment was *scheduled* within 60 days, then the client initiated accessing the Support Services in a timely manner. Even though the first available appointment may be beyond the 60-day time limit, the referral was initiated within 60 days of the date the referral was received and is valid. When the referral is for dental work, the dentist submits an evaluation and cost estimate for approval. He must also provide information as to when the approved treatment will be completed. The dental referral will reflect the estimated completion date. If additional work is required beyond the estimated completion date, another Dental Assistance referral and dental evaluation will be required.

## System for the Delivery of Support Services

The majority of Families First Support Services are either provided through a broker system or by the DHS District Office through Delegated Purchase Authority (DPA). The DHS Caseworker will issue a referral for Support Services after identifying the participant’s need and eligibility according to Families First Support Services policy.

Support Services will be provided in a timely manner within the timeframe specified for the particular services. **The Broker is to notify the Caseworker within three days upon determining that a Support Services cannot be provided.**

### *Broker Responsibility for Service Delivery*

- Brokers will contract with all appropriate licensed service providers. Providers should be recognized within the local communities for providing quality services at reasonable rates. The Brokers are responsible for the negotiation, the development and the enforcement of any and all contractual agreements made with Families First Support Services providers. Providers may be

mass transit systems, van services, bus services, taxi companies, other transportation services, dentists, opticians, local retail businesses, garages and mechanics.

- Transportation brokers will develop and maintain a network of transportation and other service providers for Families First participants in each county and/or community. This network should include alternative means of providing transportation to participants residing in remote areas of the state.
- Upon receiving a referral from the Department of Human Services, Brokers will contact Families First participants within three working days to arrange for Support Services. The Broker will notify the Department of Human Services within three working days if services can not be provided.
- With authorization from the DHS Caseworker, the broker may authorize the transportation provider to transport a Families First participant across county lines if a work component is nearer her home. A child of a Families First participant will not be transported to child care outside the county unless there is a special need (applies to van service only).
- Security measures must be in place for managing the distribution and control of the mass transit passes. Families First participants will sign a receipt acknowledging receipt of the transit pass.

### **Transportation Assistance**

Families First participants are eligible for transportation services. Transportation assistance will be provided to all work component activities, to other authorized Support Services, and to case staffings for the STEPS program. Transportation assistance continues for Families First participants until case closure as long as they are still in work plan components.

Transportation will be terminated at the point the individual become non-compliant with the PRP. A referral to reinstate transportation assistance will be issued within three (3) days if the participant agrees to comply. Transportation assistance must be made available as soon as possible, within 14 days from the date the participant agreed to comply, in order to prevent an interruption in the time count. In non-sanction situations, transportation will be terminated at the effective date of closure.

The DHS Caseworker must evaluate transportation needs and options for Families First participants in conjunction with the work components and Support Services referrals specified in the PRP.

Round trip transport is allowable for the following purposes:

- To attend Families First orientation if combined with Career Assessment component
- To training or education components
- To child care, if the parent accompanies the child
- To obtain Support Services (i.e., dental, optical, automobile repair, etc.)
- To apply for employment
- To an employment interview
- To employment, when job access transport is not available
- To activities or appointments required by Family Services Counseling\*

\*Appointments as a requirement of Family Services Counseling may involve travel to a local mental health clinic; to a drug and alcohol treatment center; or to other counseling, evaluation and/or treatment programs. Assumptions should not be made that these are TennCare trips.

Transportation assistance may be offered in the form of:

- reimbursement of \$4 per day (when the participant elects to provide his/her own transportation) and, if one way travel exceeding 25 miles is required to attend a work component, an additional \$1 per day; or
- mass transit passes; or
- Broker contracted vans or taxi services.

**NOTE:** *If a participant is late to a component, the transportation payment will still be \$4.00. The amount of the payment is  **tied to attendance**  only and is not tied to compliance or failure to comply in any way. Non-compliance can only be addressed by DHS through the sanction process.*

### **Authorizing Multiple Forms of Transportation Assistance**

In some areas, it may be necessary to combine two or more forms of transportation assistance to meet the participant's needs.

Example: The only form of transportation available to transport the participant to a Families First work activity is a contracted van service. The participant resides in a remote area where the van does not provide services. The participant is not able to arrange for transportation to the work activity, but is able to arrange transportation to the van pick-up point. Van transportation and daily reimbursement should be provided.

### **Authorizing Transportation Assistance for Children of Families First Participants**

The children of Families First participants may also need transportation to childcare. Children are eligible to be transported with the caretaker by the mass transit pass, or Broker contracted van or taxi services.

### **Transportation Options**

Broker contracted van and taxi services will be the “last resort” transportation option. These costly fares are difficult for the participant to pay when the transportation assistance is discontinued. Encourage the participant to make arrangements that are safe for the participant and her children. Such arrangements could include car-pooling. When a car pool is utilized, only one individual will be reimbursed and the other(s) will be receiving “free” transportation services. Both are not to receive a reimbursement.

Unless extenuating circumstances exist, the transportation broker will authorize:

1. mass transit as the first option, if available in the area;
2. a cash reimbursement check or gas voucher as the second option; and
3. van pools and/or taxi services as the last option.

#### **Exceptions to this order of options include, but are not limited to:**

- use of van services in rural areas when the participant does not have access to a dependable vehicle and car pooling is not an available option;
- provision for reimbursement in urban areas when use of the mass transit system would require frequent and inconvenient transfers.

If the parent/caretaker receives the daily reimbursement rate of \$4 per day, we do not pay an additional \$4 per day, per child, because the parent/caretaker provides transportation to the childcare center.

### **Participant Reimbursement**

Transportation reimbursement is based on actual attendance in a training activity or employment. Families First service providers will submit weekly attendance records to the Transportation Broker for the purpose of calculating the reimbursement amount. Employed Families First participants must submit either work schedules or pay stubs to document days at their place of employment. When training is combined with part-time work or the participant is employed at two part-time jobs, it is possible that transportation assistance would be needed for the entire (seven days) week.

When a carpool is utilized, one individual will be reimbursed and the other(s) will be receiving “free” transportation services. They are not to receive a reimbursement.

Individuals that elect to walk to their component and do not request transportation services will not receive a reimbursement.

Brokers will provide prompt and timely reimbursements to Families First participants. Participants are to receive transportation reimbursements at two-week intervals. In the event a reimbursement check is returned to the Broker, by either the U.S. Postal Service or by a service provider, the Broker should notify the DHS Caseworker immediately.

### **Mass Transit Passes**

In areas served by mass transit systems, transit passes may be used. If monthly transit passes are used, the Broker should ensure that the pass provides the sufficient amount of rides to fulfill the training and work requirements specified in the Personal Responsibility Plan (PRP). If the number of mass transit rides is not adequate to satisfy the commitment of the plan, additional transit passes will be provided.

Security measures must be in place for managing the distribution and control of the passes. Families First participants will sign a ledger acknowledging receipt of the transit pass.

### **Broker Contracted Vans or Taxi Service**

The **maximum** rate that may be paid to van or taxi service providers is \$4.22 plus 40 cents per mile. When children are riding with the parent, the transporter may charge the same rate for each child. Individual participant mileage rates shall be calculated based on the mileage from the passenger’s point of origin to the destination, i.e., home-to-work/activity or, in the case of children, home-to-child care facility.

Individuals that own a reliable, operational vehicle that is available to them during the hours of a work/training component activity are to provide their own transportation or receive a mass transit pass. They may not receive van or taxi transportation services.



### **Participant “No Shows”**

In the event a participant is not present at the time and place arranged for transport, the van or taxi service may charge for the trip. The mileage charge would be based on the same mileage criteria previously cited. This would also apply to the children, if passenger space were allotted to accommodate the children. This “no show” charge is only applicable to the first leg of the round trip. Transporters should not make, nor charge, for the return leg of the trip, when the passenger did not receive transit service to the arranged destination. The only exception would be if the transporter received instructions from the broker to pick up the participant for the return leg of the trip and the participant did not ride for a second time.

Families First policy requires participants to maintain an attendance rate of 90% in a most work/training components. Transporters should notify the Transportation Broker of participant “no shows.” The Transportation Broker will, in turn, notify the Department of Human Services Caseworker.

### **Transports That Do Not Require Additional Transportation Referrals**

Additional transportation (Support Services) referrals are not required when:

- work components change (if the participant’s participation is continuous);
- the participant’s children ride with the participant to child care (the referral is issued for the participant, only);
- the participant needs transportation to and from support services that DHS has authorized (The dental/optical/vehicle repair referral will suffice for obtaining the transportation.);
- the transportation is provided through Rehabilitation Services.

### **Job Access Transportation Services**

The focus of the Job Access and Reverse Commute Program is to implement new transportation services, to expand existing transportation services, and to improve the transit infrastructure in order to fill transportation gaps for welfare recipients and low-income families. Job Access is funded in part by DHS; the remainder is the Tennessee Department of Transportation and federal transportation funds. These services cover transportation to work, to employment related appointments and to childcare on days the parent is scheduled to work. Transportation providers may set rates for Job Access trips and charge a fare. Fares should not exceed those currently charged the general public for other types of trips. Fares may also be charged for Families First clients who are still receiving cash assistance but the Families First Transportation Broker must pay the fare.

### **DHS Responsibilities for Transportation Assistance**

- The Caseworker will discuss or review transportation assistance with the participant during each case action that affects the Personal Responsibility Plan (i.e., approvals, reviews, closures, and/or changes that could affect the participant’s continued eligibility for transportation assistance).
- The Caseworker will complete and forward a Support Services referral for transportation services to the Transportation Broker. The DHS Caseworker will explain on the form the transportation needs of the participant (i.e. reimbursement, mass transit pass, or van service)

and any additional information to assist the Broker. The referral will be sent to the Broker within three (3) days of case action.

- The Caseworker has a responsibility to notify the Transportation Broker, within three (3) working days, when the participant's transportation assistance should be terminated. If the participant is sanctioned for failure to cooperate with the Personal Responsibility Plan, the Broker will be notified to discontinue any transportation assistance.

### **Support Services Broker's Responsibilities for Transportation Assistance**

- Brokers will provide prompt and timely reimbursements to Families First participants. Participants are to receive transportation reimbursements at two-week intervals.
- In the event a reimbursement check is returned to the Broker, by either the U.S. Postal Service or by a service provider, the Broker should notify the DHS Caseworker immediately.
- If monthly transit passes are used, the Broker should ensure that the pass provides the sufficient amount of rides to fulfill the training and work requirements specified in the Personal Responsibility Plan (PRP).
- Security measures must be in place for managing the distribution and control of mass transit passes. Families First participants will sign a ledger acknowledging receipt of the pass.
- Transporters should notify the Transportation Broker of participant "no shows." The Transportation Broker will, in turn, notify the Department of Human Services Caseworker.
- Upon receiving notification from the Department of Human Services that a customer is not in compliance with the Personal Responsibility Plan, the Transportation Broker will immediately terminate transportation assistance (i.e., van service, mass transit passes, reimbursement).
- If two forms of transportation are needed, the DHS supervisor must approve the combination and document the reason for the combination.

### **Limited Vehicle Repairs**

A personal vehicle which needs repair may be a barrier to the successful compliance to the Personal Responsibility Plan for some participants. Families First funds, not to exceed \$550 per 12-month period, will be used to provide limited vehicle repairs for Families First participants who meet the guidelines. This limit may only be exceeded with the prior approval of State Office, after receiving the repair estimate and before any repair work is performed.

If possible, another method of transportation will be provided for the participant while the repairs are being made. All reimbursements for vehicle repairs are to be made directly to the Vendor. Under no circumstances will repair reimbursements be made payable to the participants.

Some participants may have access to family or friends who can make the repairs but they need assistance to purchase the parts or supplies. The vehicle repair funds could be used for the cost of these parts or supplies. Only the replacement parts appropriate for the model of the vehicle and necessary to render the car operational will be purchased by the Support Services Broker. When participants take advantage of this provision to purchase parts, the Broker will purchase the parts directly from the vendor. This practice ensures that only parts that are necessary and appropriate for the client's vehicle are purchased.

When providing a referral for limited vehicle repairs, caution the participant not to begin any repairs without receiving authorization from the Support Services Broker. Participants will not be reimbursed for any out-of-pocket repair expenses.

The authorized repairs, not to exceed \$550 per 12-month period, **must make the vehicle operational. Support Services policy does not allow for supervisory approval to pay for charges in excess of the limit for vehicle repairs.** This limit may only be exceeded with the prior approval of State Office. Typical of such repairs would be:

The replacement of parts such as starters, batteries, belts and tires or items required by the Department of Safety.

- When emissions testing is required for vehicle license renewal, funds may be used for repairs after documentation of test failure is provided.
- Repairs that are required by the Department of Safety in order to operate the vehicle on public roadways. The Department of Safety requires vehicles have a front windshield and a rear bumper. Participant must provide documentation of having received a citation from either local law enforcement or Tennessee Highway Patrol. (Refer to Attachment D)

Caseworkers and contract staff must work together to determine which repairs are absolutely necessary to make the **vehicle operational**, bearing in mind that there are limits to the amount of funds available from Families First for vehicle repairs.

Bodywork is prohibited due to a lack of available funding.

The cost of the needed repairs cannot exceed 80% of the total value of the vehicle, unless approved by the District Program Supervisor. To receive the repair, the participant must use or will use the vehicle in need of repair to provide for his or her own transportation. In order for the contractor to be able to ensure that the cost of repairs does not exceed 80% of the total value of the vehicle, the value of the automobile must be included on the referral from DHS.

Vehicle repair services must be initiated before closure of the Families First cash assistance.

### **DHS Responsibilities for Limited Vehicle Repairs**

- The Caseworker will determine that the participant is enrolled and in compliance with a Families First component for at least sixty- (60) days. The District Program Supervisor must approve any exceptions to the sixty-day enrollment requirement.
- The Caseworker will determine that the participant is the owner, or is responsible for any loan repayments, of the vehicle in need of repair. The car's registration is used to verify that the client owns the vehicle; an expired registration does not satisfy this requirement.
- Participants requesting vehicle repairs must have owned the vehicle for a minimum of three months and documented on AERVH before repairs will be authorized. (An exception may be allowed when there is no alternative transportation available to required PRP activities. Exceptions require the approval of the District Program Supervisor).
- The Caseworker will document the make, model, year, and estimated value of the vehicle on the Support Services Referral Form.

## **Support Services Broker's Responsibilities for Limited Vehicle Repairs**

- The Support Services Broker will identify and contract with mechanics or garages to provide limited vehicle repair services. Brokers are responsible for the negotiation, the development, and the enforcement of any and all contractual agreements made with any Families First Support Services provider. The selected vendors are expected to provide quality services at reasonable rates.
- The Support Services Broker will require that the mechanics and/or garages include a detailed description of the vehicle (make, model, year, VIN number, and license number) on all invoices submitted to the broker.
- The Support Services Broker will assure that replacement items such as tires and batteries are installed on the referred vehicle at the point of purchase.
- The Support Services Broker will contact the participant within three working days of receiving the referral from the Department of Human Services. Initial arrangements should be completed within seven days of the referral.
- The Support Services Broker will provide the participant with information regarding the appointment date and time, the provider's name, location and telephone number.

## **Dental Assistance**

Some Families First participants may need dental services in order to successfully participate in a Families First component or to obtain/retain employment. TennCare-Medicaid does not provide general dental insurance to most caretakers. As a result, many participants suffer from dental pain that prevents participation in a Families First activity or dental problems affecting appearance are a barrier to employment for individuals entering the workforce. Families First contract staff may also call dental problems to the attention of the Caseworker.

Dental assistance is available only to the extent it is not available through TennCare-Medicaid or other insurance coverage. Families First funds, not to exceed \$400 per 12-month period, will be used to provide dental assistance for Families First participants who meet the guidelines. Dental services must be initiated before closure of the Families First cash assistance. Services are considered initiated when the participant schedules an appointment with the vendor that will be providing the service.

Only dental work necessary to address **the immediate problem** is to be authorized. For example:

- Routine cleanings when part of the treatment protocol and fillings
- Extractions
- Bridges (fixed or removable) only if they are less costly than partials or complete dentures
- Full and partial dentures
- Amalgam restorations (crowns and fillings)

## **DHS Responsibilities for Dental Assistance**

- The Caseworker will determine that the participant has been in compliance with a Families First work component for a minimum of sixty- (60) days. (The DHS Program Supervisor may grant a waiver from the 60 day criteria). Also, dental pain must be preventing the client from participating in a Families First activity or the dental problems are affecting the participants appearance and creating a barrier to employment. For appearance-related referrals, the participant must be work-ready.

- The Caseworker will confirm that there are no other available resources for payment such as TennCare or other health/dental insurance.
- Dental assistance is limited to \$400 per a 12-month period. There are no exceptions in policy for exceeding the limit with supervisory approval.
- In unique situations, additional funds may be allotted with approval from State Office. Prior approval must be obtained on dental work that is estimated to exceed the \$400 limit.

### **Support Services Broker Responsibilities for Dental Assistance**

- The Broker will identify and contract with professionals to provide dental services. Brokers are responsible for the negotiation, the development and the enforcement of any and all contractual agreements made with any Families First support services provider. The selected dentists and/or dental clinics are expected to provide quality services at reasonable rates.
- The Broker will be responsible for conveying policy information regarding the limitations of the dental assistance to all contracted dental service providers. It is essential that dental service providers understand that Families First Support Services dental assistance funds are to be used to address **the immediate problem** that instigated the dental assistance referral. Families First is not providing dental insurance, but supportive funding to assist with acute dental problems and/or employment barriers.
- Each Families First participant should be contacted by the Support Services Broker within three days and initial arrangements completed within seven days of the referral from the Department of Human Services. If dental services cannot be arranged, the Department of Human Services Caseworker should be notified immediately.
- The referral from the Support Services Broker should include the provider's name, location, and telephone number and appointment information.
- If the participant needs transportation to the dental appointment, the Broker will arrange for the necessary transportation.
- If the Families First participant does not show for an appointment arranged by the Broker, the Broker should negotiate with the provider to see if the provider will refrain from charging fees for missed the appointments. Missed appointment fees will the charged against the customers \$400 limit. If a provider will not refrain from missed appointment fees, then the Broker should attempt to renegotiate with another provider.

### **Optical Assistance**

Some Families First participants may need glasses or contact lens to participate successfully in a Families First component or employment. TennCare-Medicaid provides only limited or no optical services to caretakers. Many Families First participants are unable to read or travel safely without glasses.

Optical assistance is limited to \$175 per 12-month-period. A new prescription or a change in prescription is required for the authorization of glasses or contact lens. Optical services must be initiated before closure of the Families First cash assistance.

A referral for optical assistance will be authorized when:

- A visual problem prevents the full and satisfactory participation in a work component; and
- There are no other available resources for payment such as civic clubs (i.e., Lion's Club Eye Bank) TennCare-Medicaid or other health/optical insurance; and

- The participant has been in compliance with a Families First work component for at least sixty- (60) day. (The District Program Supervisor may grant a waiver from the sixty-day criteria).

### **DHS Responsibilities for Optical Assistance**

- The Caseworker will determine that there are no other available resources for optical payment, such as, civic clubs, TennCare-Medicaid or other health/optical insurance, and
- The Caseworker will determine that the participant has been in compliance with a Families First work component for at least sixty –(60) days. (The District Program Supervisor may grant a waiver from the sixty-day criteria).

### **Support Services Broker Responsibilities for Optical Assistance**

- The Broker will identify and contract with professionals to provide optical services. Brokers are responsible for the negotiation, the development, and the enforcement of any and all contractual agreements made with any Families First support services provider. The selected optometrists and opticians are expected to provide quality services at reasonable rates.
- The Broker will be responsible for conveying policy information regarding the limitations of the optical assistance to all contracted optical service providers.
- Each Families First participant should be contacted by the Support Services Broker within three days and initial arrangements completed within seven days of the referral from the Department of Human Services. If optical services cannot be arranged, the Department of Human Services Caseworker should be notified immediately.
- The referral from the Support Services Broker should include the provider's name, location, and telephone number and appointment information.
- If the participant requires transport to the optical appointment, the Broker will arrange for the necessary transportation.

### **Vehicle Related Expenses**

Some Families First participants may need financial assistance in obtaining vehicle license and registration, paying county wheel taxes and emission testing fees and/or renewing/obtaining a Tennessee vehicle operator's license. Families First Support Services funds may be used to pay for any and/or all of the vehicle related expenses if it will enable the participant to provide his/her own transportation to a Families First component. These support services are offered in addition to the limited vehicle repair. Families First Support Services dollars cannot be used to pay for car insurance or sales tax associated with the purchase of a vehicle.

Payments are to be made directly to the responsible state, county or city government agency. The amount to be paid will be the actual cost levied for the county of residence. Participants will not be reimbursed for any out-of-pocket vehicle related expenses. **Under no circumstances will Families First funds or state funds be used to pay for fines and/or court costs associated with accidents or traffic and parking violations.**

For vehicle license, registration, county wheel taxes and emission fees:

- The vehicle must be registered in the name of the participant; **and**

- the participant must be enrolled and in compliance with a Families First component for at least sixty-(60) days (any exceptions to the sixty day enrollment requirement must be approved by the District Program Supervisor); **and**
- the participant will use the vehicle to provide her own transportation to a Families First component.

For Tennessee vehicle operator's license:

- The participant must be enrolled and in compliance with a Families First component for at least sixty –(60) days. The District Program Supervisor must approve any exceptions to the sixty-day criteria: **and**
- the participant will use the vehicle operator's license to provide her own transportation to a Families First component: **and**
- the participant lacks a valid Tennessee vehicle operator's license.

### **DHS Responsibilities for Vehicle Related Expenses**

- The Caseworker will determine that the participant is enrolled in and in compliance with a Families First component for at least sixty days. The District Program Supervisor must approve any exceptions to the sixty-day criteria. For vehicle license, registration, county wheel taxes and emission fees, the Caseworker will determine that the participant is the owner of the vehicle.

### **Support Services Broker's Responsibilities for Vehicle Related Expenses**

- The Support Services Broker will contact the participant within three working days of receiving the referral from the Department of Human Services.
- Payments for license, registration, county wheel taxes and emission fees should be processed promptly to enable the participant to renew prior to the expiration date.
- Broker should confirm that all vehicle registration and vehicle operator's documents were issued to the same individual as that cited on the referral.

### **Work-Related Support Services**

Work Related Support Services are available to assist those participants who have received a bona fide offer of employment and are ready to enter the workforce and transition to self-sufficiency. Families First participants may need assistance in obtaining one or more of the following additional Work Related Support Services to participate fully in a work component or employment:

- Professional Trade licenses required by the employer;
- certain medical test, inoculations and/or examinations (not provided by TennCare).

### **Allotment for Specific Support Services**

The allotment for each specific support service is limited to the actual cost of the services or \$100; whichever is less. Each specific service is limited to a one-time (not annual) purchase. However, if a case closes and re-opens at a later date, the individual may again be eligible for Work Related Support Services. All payments for specific support services are made directly to the vendor. Under no circumstances will payment or reimbursement be made payable to the participant.

## **Work Related Support Services Guidelines**

Assistance in obtaining a professional trade license is provided for under Work Related Support Services. Support Services funds are used to pay for the license only. If a licensure examination is administered to determine if a participant may obtain a professional trade license, the examination fees are to be paid by training funds. If the examination fee includes the trade license, only that portion of the fee that would be paid by the general public in obtaining that license may be paid using Support Services funds. Fees for trade licenses may not exceed that charged the general public for the same license.

- No drug testing fees will be paid using Families First funds.
- Bonding fees are not paid by Support Services monies.
- If a Families First case closes and reopens at a later date, the client would again be eligible for Specific Support Services.

A client participating in a training course is expected to apply for PELL grants. If the course does not qualify as a PELL course or if PELL does not cover the costs of the course, some items can be purchased with training dollars.

Fees for trade licenses may not exceed that charged the general public for the same license. Funds are used to pay for the license only. If the licensure examination is administered to determine if a student may obtain a professional trade license, these fees should be paid by **training funds**. If the exam fee includes the trade license, only that portion of the fee that would be paid by the general public in obtaining that license may be paid using Support Services funds.

- The costs for fees, textbooks, and tuition are to be paid from the Pell Grant. In situations where the participant cannot obtain a Pell Grant, those expenses will be paid out of **training dollars**.
- Background checks for employment are not a cost covered under Work Related Support Services.

The purchase of any items allowed under Work Related Support Services must be in process before closure of the Families First cash assistance.

## **DHS Responsibilities for Specific Support Services**

- The Caseworker will determine if the participant meets the policy criteria to receive Work Related Support Services.
- The Caseworker will verify the need for support services using any of the following from:
  - Information provided by the employer
  - Information provided by the participant
  - Information provided by work component providers
  - Information provided by the Families First Support Services broker.

## **Support Services Broker Responsibility for Specific Support Services**

- The Broker will identify and contract with professionals to provide specific support services. Brokers are responsible for the negotiation, the development, and the enforcement of any and all contractual agreements made with any Families First support services providers. The selected vendors are expected to provide quality services at reasonable rates.



- The Broker will be responsible for conveying policy information regarding the limitations of the specific support services to all contracted service providers.
- The Support Services Broker should contact each Families First participant within three days and initial arrangements completed within seven days of the referral from the Department of Human Services. If specific support services cannot be arranged, the Department of Human Services Caseworker should be notified immediately.
- The referral from the Support Services Broker should include the provider's name, location, and telephone number and appointment information.
- If the participant requires transport to the vendor's place of business, the Broker will arrange for the necessary transportation.

# Appendix A

## Employment Career Services Forms



SCREENING INTAKE INTERVIEW

**Section I**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Gender: ☐ M ☐ F  
Marital Status: ☐ Married ☐ Single ☐ Divorced ☐ Separated  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_ City/State/Zip \_\_\_\_\_  
Home Telephone: \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ Work Phone \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail \_\_\_\_\_  
Age range: ☐ 16-20 yrs. ☐ 21-30yrs. ☐ 31-40yrs. ☐ 40yrs. +  
Racial-ethnic identification: ☐ African-American ☐ Asian ☐ Caucasian  
☐ Hispanic ☐ other

**Section II**

Education: (check all that apply) ☐ Didn't complete high school ☐ GED  
☐ Graduation from high school ☐ Completion of Vocational/technical School  
☐ Community College ☐ Completion of some from college ☐ Graduation from college  
☐ Graduate work ☐ Military service ☐ Apprenticeship

**Section III**

Children: How many children do you have? \_\_\_\_  
Ages: ☐ 1 year or less ☐ 2-4 yrs. ☐ 5-10yrs. ☐ 11-16 yrs. ☐ 17yrs. or more  
Do you need special support as a parent? ☐ Yes ☐ No

**Section IV**

Employment: Are you currently employed ☐ Yes ☐ No  
What was your last job? \_\_\_\_\_ How long did you work there? \_\_\_\_\_  
Why did you leave? \_\_\_\_\_

**Section V**

Services needed: (check all that apply):  
☐ Help with childcare ☐ Help with transportation to work ☐ Training for a job  
☐ Help with finding a job ☐ Help with expunging a criminal record  
☐ Help in moving out of a bad relationship ☐ Help with drugs/alcohol  
☐ Help with my child's school problems ☐ Help change my financial situation

Name of ECS

Date

## TO THE INTERVIEWER:

**PREPARATION:** The *Screening Intake Interview* is viewed as the opportunity to begin building mutual respect, using active listening skills, observing and being responsive to facial expressions, body language and overall reaction to questions.

The ECS should reflect on the **SOLER** skills (face the client **SQUARLEY**, adopt an **OPEN** posture, **LEAN** toward the client, maintain good **EYE** contact, and try to be **RELAXED**) learned during the CDF certification training. During the interview, the ECS can begin to assist the customer in addressing her/his needs and identifying barriers that may prevent successful career paths.

**PURPOSE:** The purpose of the intake interview is to achieve the following:

- ❑ Develop an understanding of the client (history & current information);
- ❑ Identify and define a client's goals;
- ❑ Identify obstacles to and resources for the goal; and
- ❑ 4) Match the client's needs with appropriate services.

**PROCESS:** It is the responsibility of the ECS to complete the Screening Intake Interview form prior to administering the Tennessee Readiness Scale, a screening tool. In preparing the client, inform her/him of the following:

1. This process should take between 15–20 minutes.
2. The Assessment is in three stages: the intake interview, the Tennessee Readiness Scale and the career assessment. After the interview, the client will continue with the Screening Tool and Career Assessment. At the end of the assessment, there will be a time for the client, caseworker and ECS to discuss and develop the PRP.

**FAMILIES FIRST  
CAREER ASSESSMENT SUMMARY REPORT  
C O N F I D E N T I A L**

**DATE:** \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

**TO CASEWORKER:** \_\_\_\_\_

**FROM ECS/ECSPLUS:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Section I.**

**Client Name:**

**Social Security Number:**

**Address:**

**City/zip/county:**

**Section II.**

**Tennessee Readiness Scale**

Please check the appropriate box to indicate the results of the assessment.

- Recommended referral to Family Service Counseling ☐
- No barriers identified ☐

**Section III.**

**Provider Career Assessment(s) used:**

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**Section IV.**

**Interpretation**

Based on the career assessment(s), the client is prepared to enter:

- ☐ Employment
- ☐ ECS
- ☐ Work Preparation
- ☐ Job Training
- ☐ Post-Secondary Education

**Section V.**

**Comments/Observations**

(Please base statements on observable behaviors, such as body language, communication skills during the screening intake interview, and ability to follow basic instructions and procedures.)

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Vocational Objective

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**Tennessee Department of Human Services  
Employment Career Services**

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## **Customer Portfolio Checklist**

Please use this Portfolio checklist to ensure that all of the necessary items are collected and maintained in the customer's portfolio.

- ☐ Career Assessment Summary Report (located in separate folder)
- ☐ Informal Career Assessments
- ☐ Intake Interview Form
- ☐ Completed Master Application
- ☐ Resume
- ☐ Certificates, Licenses, Diplomas
- ☐ Career Plan with long and short-term goals
- ☐ Employer Contact Sheet

Comments:

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## **ECS JOB DEVELOPMENT CHECKLIST**

**Name of Company**\_\_\_\_\_

**Contact Person**\_\_\_\_\_

**Date**\_\_\_\_\_

### **DO AGENCY RESEARCH (Before meeting with the employer):**

- ☐ Product
- ☐ Geographic Service Area
- ☐ Corporate Location
- ☐ Growth Trends

### **Employment Issues (During the meeting)**

- ☐ Entrance Qualifications & Requirements:
- ☐ High School/GED
- ☐ Background Check/Drug Test
- ☐ Career Opportunities
- ☐ Positions Currently Available
- ☐ How to Apply
- ☐ Organization Hours of Operation
- ☐ Shift Differentials
- ☐ Scheduling
- ☐ Part-Time/Full Time
- ☐ Training Schedule
- ☐ Starting Wage
- ☐ Health & Other Benefits

### **Employment Issues With DHS (During the meeting)**

- ☐ Assessment
- ☐ Extended ECS
- ☐ WOTC (Federal Work Opportunities Tax Credit to Employers)
- ☐ EITC (Earned Income Tax Credit to Employees)
- ☐ Specific Training Needs (Industry Specific)
- ☐ Job Placement
- ☐ Families First, The Transition from Welfare to Work

### **Follow-up (To do after the meeting)**

- ☐ Thank you note
- ☐ Develop a file on the company
- ☐ Contact periodically (usually monthly)
- ☐ Other:



## ECS JOB DEVELOPMENT FORM

### **INSTRUCTIONS:**

**Purpose:** The purpose of this form is to provide a guide to Employment Career Specialists in her/his responsibility of developing employer relationships to promote the Families First participants in obtaining jobs at their business. The Job Development Checklist should be used before, during and after the contact to ensure that all of the major points are addressed for an effective meeting.

At the top of the page **complete the identifying information**, name of company, contact person at the business, and the date of the meeting.

1. **Prior to contacting the company** representative, conduct research using the Internet, yellow pages of the telephone book, the Chamber and Commerce and brochures from the company to be as well informed and comfortable with your knowledge base to conduct a productive conversation.
2. **The second section** of the ECS Job Development Checklist contains issues that should be covered during the meeting with the company representative pertaining to the company. The next section, Employment Issues With DHS, provides a list of advantages to the company for hiring Families First participants and should be noted and underscored during the meeting.
3. **Immediately following the employer meeting**, check the appropriate items at the bottom of the page noting the importance of sending a thank you note, developing a file for the company, and periodic contacts.

This form should be used each time an employer is to be contacted, filed and maintained whenever the employer is contacted.

## JOB DEVELOPMENT LOG

### INSTRUCTIONS:

**Purpose:** The Job Development Log is to be completed and maintained by the Employment Career Specialist for the purpose of documenting employers contacted.

### Column

- One: Enter the date of the contact.
- Two: Enter the name of company.
- Three: Enter the name of the representative with whom you met.
- Four: List the street address and county if different
- Five: List the telephone number company contact person
- Six: List the product of the company, including a service provided
- Seven: Check this space if the Families First Desk Reference Card (these can be obtained from the Central Supply unit of DHS) was completed and provided to the contact person
- Eight: Indicate by a check mark if the Work Opportunity Tax Credit was discussed with the company representative.
- Nine: Note your impression of the representative's response to your meeting noting if there should be specific follow-up, such as, the Department of Labor & Workforce Development representative to further discuss employer tax credits, or general observations, such as, interest in knowing the facts about Families First.

## EMPLOYMENT CAREER SERVICES MONTHLY REPORT

NAME	MONTH/ YEAR
DHS COUNTY OFFICE	AGENCY
DATE CDF CERTIFIED:	ECS TELEPHONE NUMBER (EXT)
ECS EMAIL ADDRESS:	

ACTIVITY	PREVIOUS MONTH	CURRENT MONTH	CUMMULATIVE TOTAL
Number referrals to ECS/ECS Plus			
Number career assessments			
Number clients - full time			
Number clients – part time			
Number clients – extended			
Number clients entering job training			
Number clients entering post-secondary education			
Number clients employed for 9 months			
Number clients leaving ECS with wages < \$9.00 per hour			
Number clients leaving ECS with wages > \$9.00 per hour			
Number clients leaving ECS unemployed			
Number ECS job development contacts			

COMMENTS

# Appendix B

## Families First Attendance Tracking Form



## FAMILIES FIRST ATTENDANCE FORM

**Period reported: From**    /   /    **to**    /   /   

NAME: (Last) _____ (First) _____ Social Security Number <u>   </u> / <u>   </u> / <u>   </u>		
Mailing Address _____ Apartment # <u>   </u> City _____ Zip Code <u>   </u>		
Telephone Number(    ) <u>   </u> - <u>   </u> ECS _____ Agency _____ Caseworker _____		

Day	Date	Activity	Time in	Time out	Total Hours
MONDAY					
TUESDAY					
WEDNESDAY					
THURSDAY					
FRIDAY					

Day	Date	Activity	Time in	Time out	Total Hours
MONDAY					
TUESDAY					
WEDNESDAY					
THURSDAY					
FRIDAY					

Client Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Note: Forms must be accurate and signed to account for the activities attended for the period reported.

# Appendix C

## Civil Rights Information

## COMPLAINTS OF DISCRIMINATION

The department resolves Title VI complaints with due diligence in accordance with complaint guideline procedures as set forth by the Human Rights Commission of the State of Tennessee.

### Complaint Procedures

Anyone alleging racial/ethnic discrimination against department's personnel may file a complaint with the facility's local Title VI coordinator or directly with the department Title VI Coordinator. Complaints may also be filed with the Tennessee Human Rights Commission (state level); the U.S. Regional Office for Civil Rights, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services; and/or the Department of Justice (federal level). A complaint may be filed at both the state and the federal levels, separately or concurrently, at any time during the process.

- A. Instruct the complainant to submit the complaint in writing, preferably on Form HS-2631, *Complaint Under Civil Rights Act of 1964* (see Attachment F). The form may be filled out by the complainant, their representative, or a Title VI coordinator. A verbal complaint may be taken, but then must be written up on Form HS-2631. Unless a complaint is already being filed at the state or federal level, it is preferred that all complaints be first filed at the local level - within thirty (30) days of the alleged discriminatory act. Experience shows that complaints are more easily resolved at the point of origination.
- B. Record the complaint in the Title VI Complaint Log. List complainant identification and type/status of complaint.
- C. Send the original copy of the complaint to the department Title VI Coordinator in Nashville (include all pertinent documentation). Give a copy of the complaint to the complainant and retain one for facility files. The local Title VI coordinator must notify the department Title VI Coordinator immediately when any complaint is filed.
- D. Mail a letter to the complainant acknowledging receipt of the complaint within five (5) calendar days of the date that complaint was received.
- E. Conduct fact-finding investigations within thirty (30) calendar days of receipt of the complaint. The local Title VI coordinator is responsible for this initial investigation.

- F. Report investigation findings to departmental management within five (5) days of completion of investigation. If the report includes a finding of violation of Title VI, the facility should include any proposed remedial action in the *Report of Investigation*, Form HS-2632 (see Attachment G). Within five (5) calendar days after this report, the written findings will be given to the complainant. At this time, the complainant will also be informed of their right to appeal to the state or federal level if there is disagreement with investigation findings or the proposed remedial action (include appeal form and instructions for filing).
- G. To file an appeal - instruct the complainant to complete Form HS-2634, *Appeal from Finding* (see Attachment H). The local coordinator must forward to the departmental coordinator a copy of the complaint, the findings, the proposed action, and the request for an appeal within ten (10) calendar days after the date of the appeal. The form will then be forwarded to the Tennessee Human Rights Commission (THRC) or the complainant may mail the form directly.

- Tennessee Human Rights Commission  
530 Church Street; Suite 400  
Nashville, TN 37243-0745  
Phone: (615) 741-5825

The complainant may also file an appeal with the U. S. Department of Health & Human Services or other federal agency.

- U.S. Department of Health & Human Services  
Office for Civil Rights  
Atlanta Federal Center  
61 Forsyth Street, S.W., Suite 3B70  
Atlanta, GA 30303  
Phone: (800) 368-1019/(404) 562-7886

### **General Information**

According to federal regulations, a federal complaint (to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Department of Justice, or other federal agency) must be filed no later than 180 calendar days after the alleged discrimination occurred. To allow a complainant time to file sequentially within the department and externally to the department (if desired) the complaint should be filed at the local or departmental level no later than 30 calendar days after the alleged discrimination occurred. If a complaint is filed beyond the 30 calendar day period, the department will still investigate and process the complaint if the filing is prompt enough to allow



the departmental proceedings to be concluded and still leave sufficient time for the complainant to file externally.

If a complaint is filed both within the department and externally to the department (state or federal level) during the same period, the external complaint supersedes the internal complaint filing; accordingly, the local level or departmental level complaint procedures will be suspended pending outcome of the external complaint.

A complainant has the right to withdraw their complaint or appeal request at any time. The withdrawal must be submitted in writing, preferably on Form HS-2633, *Withdrawal of Complaint or Appeal for Fair Hearing* (see Attachment I).

### **Forms and Reports**

- Form HS-2631, *Complaint under Civil Rights Act of 1964*, may be used for filing complaints. In lieu of using the complaint form, the complainant can prepare a letter describing the complaint.
- Form HS-2632, *Report of Investigation*, may be used to summarize and report the findings of an investigation; or the general outline of the form can be incorporated into a report structured by the investigator, if it addresses the essential issues outlined in the form.
- Form HS-2633, *Withdrawal of Complaint or Appeal for Fair Hearing*, should be used if a complaint or a request for appeal (to the state level) is withdrawn. A request for withdrawal must be in writing.
- Commission).Form HS-2634, *Appeal from Finding*, may be used to appeal a finding, or the proposed remedial action by the agency, to the state level (Tennessee Human Rights
- Form HS-2635, *Title VI Self-Survey*, must be submitted annually by each agency to report facility demographics, including racial and ethnic data.

## **Recommended Contract Agency Compliance Plan for Title VI**

The following outline describes the recommended format and components of a sub-recipient Title VI Plan to be maintained on file at the provider agency. The Title VI plan is required for contractors, sub-recipients, or facilities providing services through an agreement with the Department of Human Services. DHS will provide the identified components (**DHS**) to assist with implementation. It is the provider agency's responsibility to comply with Title VI requirements.

- I. Introduction
  - a. Statute (**DHS**)
  - b. Purpose (**DHS**)
  - c. LEP (**DHS**)
  - d. Covered Entities (**DHS**)
- II. Census Demographics
  - a. Tennessee Hispanic Population (**DHS**)
  - b. County information for each county in service area
- III. Title VI Coordinator
  - a. Designation by agency
  - b. Responsibilities
- IV. Staff Training
  - a. Agency manual
  - b. New Employee Orientation
  - c. Annual In-Service training
  - d. Copy of Training Video (**DHS**)
- V. Monitoring for Compliance
  - a. Contract Language and Assurances (copy of Title VI contract language and any required Title VI Assurances)
  - b. Internal Monitoring
  - c. Contract Monitoring
- VI. Public Notification
  - a. Posters (Title VI, Interpretation Service, "I Speak" cards/posters, etc.) (**DHS**)
  - b. DHS Title VI brochure (**DHS**)
  - c. Nondiscrimination statement on publications
- VII. Complaint Procedures
  - a. Complaint logs
  - b. Investigations
  - c. Reporting
  - d. Appeals
- VIII. Glossary
  - a. Definition of terms (**DHS**)
- IX. Sample forms
  - a. Complaint form (**DHS**)
  - b. Complaint log (**DHS**)
  - c. Training log (**DHS**)
  - d. Title VI Compliance Report (**DHS**)
  - e. Appeal form (**DHS**)
  - f. Appeal or Complaint Withdrawal form (**DHS**)
  - g. Report of Investigation form (**DHS**)

## Contract Agency Title VI Compliance Plan Information on Recommended Content of Plan

### **Section I: Introduction**

Copies of the Statute, Purpose, Limited English Proficiency (LEP) and Covered Entities are enclosed. The Title VI policy applies to all programs and facilities operated directly by the Tennessee Department of Human Services and to all facilities and programs operated by agencies under contract to the Department. The intent of the Title VI regulation is to ensure that all persons, regardless of their race, color or national origin, are allowed to participate in federally funded programs. When an agency has a board or committee which acts in an advisory or policy making capacity, the agency should take steps to ensure that minorities are notified of the existence of these groups and are provided equal opportunity to participate as members.

### **Section II: Census Demographics**

Maps with information on Tennessee's Hispanic population are enclosed. Other demographic information for individual counties may be obtained from the Census 2000 web site at [www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov). If you are unable to contact the Bureau on-line, you may contact them by mail at U.S. Census Bureau, Washington, D.C. 20233, or contact their Public Information Office for assistance at (301) 763-3030.

### **Section III: Title VI Coordinator**

Each agency under contract with the Department must designate one individual as the Title VI Coordinator to be responsible for compliance with regulations at their agency. The name and contact information for this person should be forwarded to the Department. A list of duties for this Coordinator is enclosed.

### **Section IV: Staff Training**

Included in your agency's staff training manual should be information on Title VI. All staff should receive In-Service training on an annual basis to continually inform and reinforce to staff their responsibility to provide quality services to all clients regardless of their race, color and national origin. Title VI training should be included in all new employee orientation sessions. All training should be documented and a training roster provided to the Department. A copy of the Title VI training video, *Understanding and Abiding By Title VI of the Civil Rights Act*, is enclosed for use in staff training activities.

### **Section V: Monitoring for Compliance**

All contracts and grant agreements between the Department and the sub-recipients contain language regarding the agency's intent to comply with Title VI regulations. The agency should have in place internal monitoring procedures to ensure the agency's continued compliance with Title VI regulations. Contract agencies will continue to be monitored by F&A for compliance with all terms of their contracts with the Department including Title VI. The Department may also conduct routine compliance reviews of the grants/contracts not scheduled for review by F&A.

## **Section VI: Public Notification**

Agencies under contract to the Department must notify the public about all available services and about their rights under Title VI. Notification methods may include the displaying of posters, distribution of brochures and the inclusion of a nondiscrimination statement on agency publications. Copies of the Department's Title VI poster and brochure are included with this informational packet. A copy of the "I Speak Card" from the Census Bureau is also enclosed.

## **Section VII: Complaint Procedures**

All clients participating in a federally funded program under contract to the Department have the right to file a complaint and subsequent appeals in the event they feel that they have been discriminated against in the application for or the receipt of services. The Department has specific procedures in place to ensure that Title VI complaints are handled in accordance with the complaint guideline procedures as set forth by Federal and State law and the Human Rights Commission of the State of Tennessee. A copy of these procedures is included with this packet.

## **Section VIII: Glossary**

A list of definitions of terms used in Title VI compliance policy is included with this information.

## **Section IX: Sample forms**

Forms need by contract agencies and clients to document compliance and to file complaints and appeals are included in this packet. Agency Title VI Coordinators should become familiar with each of these forms and inform clients and staff of their availability and use. It is the contract agency's responsibility to comply with Title VI regulations and to submit required documentation in a timely manner.

## **Covered Entities**

All entities that receive Federal financial assistance from HHS, either directly or indirectly, through a grant, contract or subcontract, are covered by this policy guidance. Covered entities include (1) any state or local agency, private institution or organization, or any public or private individual that (2) operates, provides or engages in health, or social service programs and activities and that (3) receives federal financial assistance from HHS directly or through another recipient/covered entity. Examples of covered entities include but are not limited to hospitals, nursing homes, home health agencies, managed care organizations, universities and other entities with health or social service research programs, state, county and local health agencies, state Medicaid agencies, state, county and local welfare agencies, programs for families, youth and children, Head Start programs, public and private contractors, subcontractors and vendors, physicians, and other providers who receive Federal financial assistance from HHS.

The term Federal financial assistance to which Title VI applies includes, but is not limited to, grants and loans of Federal funds, grants or donations of Federal property, details of Federal personnel, or any agreement, arrangement or other contract which has as one of its purposes the provision of assistance. (See, 45 C.F.R. Section 80.13(f); and Appendix A to the Title VI regulations, 45 C.F.R. Part 80, for additional discussion of what constitutes Federal financial assistance).

Title VI prohibits discrimination in any program or activity that receives Federal financial assistance. What constitutes a program or activity covered by Title VI was clarified by Congress in 1988, when the Civil Rights Restoration Act of 1987 (CRRRA) was enacted. The CRRRA provides that, in most cases, when a recipient/covered entity receives Federal financial assistance for a particular program or activity, all operations of the recipient/covered entity are covered by Title VI, not just the part of the program that uses the Federal assistance. Thus, all parts of the recipient's operations would be covered by Title VI, even if the Federal assistance is used only by one part.

## DEFINITIONS

**ACCENT:** Automated Client Certification and Eligibility Network for Tennessee

**ADA:** Americans with Disabilities Act

**Agency:** Any of the several federal departments or independent agencies having Title VI responsibilities.

**Applicant:** One who submits an application, request, or plan required to be approved by a department official, or by a primary recipient, as a condition of eligibility for federal financial assistance.

**APS:** Adult Protective Services

**Assurance:** A written statement or contractual agreement signed by the agency head in which a recipient agrees to administer federally assisted programs in accordance with civil rights laws and regulations.

**Beneficiaries:** Those persons to whom assistance, services, or benefits are ultimately provided.

**CACFP:** Child and Adult Care Food Program

**CAP:** Community Action Program

**CFR:** Code of Federal Regulations

**Civil Rights Compliance Reviews:** Regular systematic inspections of agency programs conducted to determine regulatory compliance with civil rights laws and regulations. Compliance reviews determine compliance and noncompliance in the delivery of benefits and services in federally assisted programs. They identify problems, such as denial of full benefits, barriers to participation, different treatment, lack of selection to advisory boards and planning committees, lack of information, and denial of the right to file a civil rights complaint. Compliance reviews may be conducted on-site or through desk audits.

**Complainant:** Any person who believes himself or any specific class of individuals to be subjected to discrimination prohibited by Title VI and makes or initiates the complaint in a legal action or proceeding.

**Complaint:** A verbal or written allegation of discrimination which indicates that any federally-assisted program is operated in such a manner that it results in disparity of treatment to persons or groups of persons because of race, color, or national origin.

**Compliance:** The fulfillment of the requirements of Title VI, other applicable laws, implementing regulations, and instructions to the extent that no distinctions are made in the delivery of any service or benefit on the basis of race, color, or national origin. (See also conciliatory agreement and *noncompliance*.)

**Compliance Review:** See *Civil Rights Compliance Reviews*

**Conciliatory Agreement:** A voluntary agreement between a federal agency and the state or between the state and a subrecipient that provides for corrective action to be taken by a recipient to eliminate discrimination in any program receiving federal assistance.

**Contractor:** A person or entity that agrees to perform services at a specified price.

**CSBG:** Community Services Block Grant

**Desk Audit:** A desk audit is a structured paper review of statistical and narrative information submitted by recipients or agency program offices, of compliance information obtained before or without going on-site, conducted according to review procedures. Desk audits include routine reviews of assurance forms or other documents to ensure that they have been properly completed.

**DHHS:** U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

**DHS:** Tennessee Department of Human Services

**Discrimination:** To make any distinction between one person or group of persons and others, either intentionally, by neglect, or by the effect of actions or lack of actions based on race, color, or national origin.

**EBT:** Electronic Benefits Transfer - automated system replacing food stamp coupons

**Families First:** Tennessee's welfare reform program (replacing AFDC) to help families gain independence from welfare by emphasizing personal responsibility, and help them enter the work force by providing education, job training, employment activities, placement assistance, transportation, child care assistance, and other support services

**Federal Assistance:** Any funding, property, aid, technical assistance, grants, or partnerships provided for the purpose of assisting a beneficiary. This assistance may be provided in the form of grants, contracts, cooperative agreements, loans, loan guarantees, property, interest subsidies, insurance, direct appropriations, and other non-cash assistance. It includes assistance received directly from federal agencies, or indirectly through other units of state and local governments.

**FIRST:** Family Investment Resource System for Tennessee

**FNS:** Food and Nutrition Services (Agency of USDA)

**MESS:** Medicaid Eligibility Services Section

**Minority:** A person or groups of persons differing from others in some characteristics and often subjected to differential treatment on the basis of race, color, or national origin.

**Noncompliance:** Failure or refusal to comply with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, other applicable civil rights laws, and implementing departmental regulations. (See compliance.)

**Parity:** The proportion of minority participation to the minority eligible population of a service delivery point is the same as the proportion of non-minority participation to the non-minority eligible population of the same delivery point.

**Post-award Review:** A routine inspection of agency programs during and after federal assistance has been provided to the beneficiary or recipient. These reviews may be cyclical or based on a priority system contingent upon the potential for noncompliance in individual programs. Reviews are normally conducted through on-site visits; however, desk audits and other mechanisms may also be used to assess operation of federally assisted programs. A post-award review may result in a written report that shows the compliance status of agency program offices and recipients. When necessary, the report will contain recommendations for corrective action. If the program office or recipient is found to be in noncompliance, technical assistance and guidance must be provided to bring the recipient into voluntary compliance. If voluntary compliance cannot be secured, formal enforcement action is then initiated.

**Potential Beneficiaries:** Those persons who are eligible to receive federally assisted program benefits and services.



**Pre-award Review:** A desk audit of the proposed operations of a program applicant for federal assistance prior to the approval of the assistance. The department must determine that the program or facility will be operated such that program benefits will be equally available to all eligible persons without regard to race, color, or national origin. The applicant may provide methods of administering the program designed to ensure that the primary recipient and subrecipients under the program would comply with all applicable regulations, and correct any existing or developing instances of noncompliance. If the documentation provided by the applicant for the desk audit is inadequate to determine compliance, then an on-site evaluation may be necessary.

**Primary Recipient:** Any recipient, which is authorized or required to extend federal financial assistance to another recipient for the purpose of carrying out a program.

**Program:** Any program, project, or activity for the provision of services, financial aid, or other benefits to individuals, or for the provision of facilities for furnishing services, financial aid, or other benefits to individuals.

**Public Notification:** Process of publicizing information on the availability of programs, services and benefits to minorities and statements of nondiscrimination. This is attained through use of newspapers, newsletters, periodicals, radio and television, community organizations, and grassroots and special needs directories, brochures, and pamphlets.

**Recipient:** Any state, political subdivision of any state, or instrumentality of any state or political subdivision, any public or private agency, institution, or organization, or other entity or any individual in any state to whom federal financial assistance is extended, directly or through another recipient, for any program, including any successor, assignee, or transferee thereof, but not including any ultimate beneficiary under such program.

**Secondary Recipient:** Any recipient that receives financial assistance to carry out a program through a primary recipient or other subrecipient.

**Service Delivery Point:** The place in which federally assisted program services or benefits are administered to the public.

**TANF:** Temporary Assistance for Needy Families – replaced federal AFDC grants as a result of the passing of Personal Responsibility Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA)

**TennCare:** Tennessee's health insurance program for uninsured, uninsurable and Medicaid eligible populations

**THRC:** Tennessee Human Rights Commission

**Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, 42 U.S.C. 2000d-4:** Federal law prohibiting discrimination based on race, color, or national origin. It covers all forms of federal aid except contracts of insurance and guaranty. It does not cover employment, except where employment practices result in discrimination against program beneficiaries or where the purpose of the federal assistance is to provide employment.

**Vendor:** An individual, group, public or private organization or institution, political entity, or commercial enterprise which, pursuant to any contract, agreement, or other arrangement with a recipient or sub recipient provides generally required goods or services which are used by or available to a beneficiary of a program.

## Title VI Statute and Regulation

Section 601 of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, 42 U.S.C. Section 2000d et. seq., states: "No person in the United States shall on the ground of race, color or national origin, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance."

Regulations implementing Title VI, provide in part at 45 C.F.R. Section 80.3 (b):

- "(1) A recipient under any program to which this part applies may not, directly or through contractual or other arrangements, on ground of race, color, or national origin:
- (i) Deny an individual any service, financial aid, or other benefit provided under the program;
  - (ii) Provide any service, financial aid, or other benefit to an individual which is different, or is provided in a different manner, from that provided to others under the program;
- (2) A recipient, in determining the types of services, financial aid, or other benefits, or facilities which will be provided under any such program or the class of individuals to whom, or the situations in which such services, financial aid or other benefits, or facilities will be provided ... ***may not directly, or through contractual or other arrangements, utilize criteria or methods of administration which have the effect of subjecting individuals to discrimination, because of their race, color or national origin, or have the effect of defeating or substantially impairing accomplishment of the objectives of the program with respect to individuals of a particular, race, color or national origin.***" (emphasis added).

## **Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964**

### **Purpose**

The purpose of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 is to prohibit programs that receive federal funds from discriminating against participants on the basis of race, color or national origin.

**Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as codified in 42 U.S.C. 2000d,** states: No person in the United States shall, on the ground of race, color, or national origin, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance.

The intent of the law is to ensure that all persons, regardless of their race, color or national origin, are allowed to participate in these federally funded programs. To ensure that the department meets its compliance responsibility, procedures have been established to provide for monitoring of Title VI compliance, activities and complaint processing in programs, directly or indirectly responsible to the department (i.e., the department's own programs, contracted services, and departmentally-funded community service organizations, all of which receive federal/state funding in whole or in part).

In 1993, the Tennessee General Assembly passed Pubic Chapter 502, which requires each entity of state government to develop a Title VI Implementation Plan to be reviewed annually. Governor Ned McWherter signed Executive Order No 56 which directed all state commissioners to review current programs for Title VI compliance. Both requirements remain in effect. The Title VI policy applies to all programs and facilities operated directly by the department and to all facilities and programs operated by individuals or groups under contract with the department.

## Title VI Coordinator Responsibilities

The Contract agency's Title VI Coordinator will be responsible for educating staff of their responsibilities under Title VI, informing clients of their rights under Title VI, monitoring the agency for continued compliance with the Title VI regulation and maintaining and submitting all required documentation for Title VI compliance.

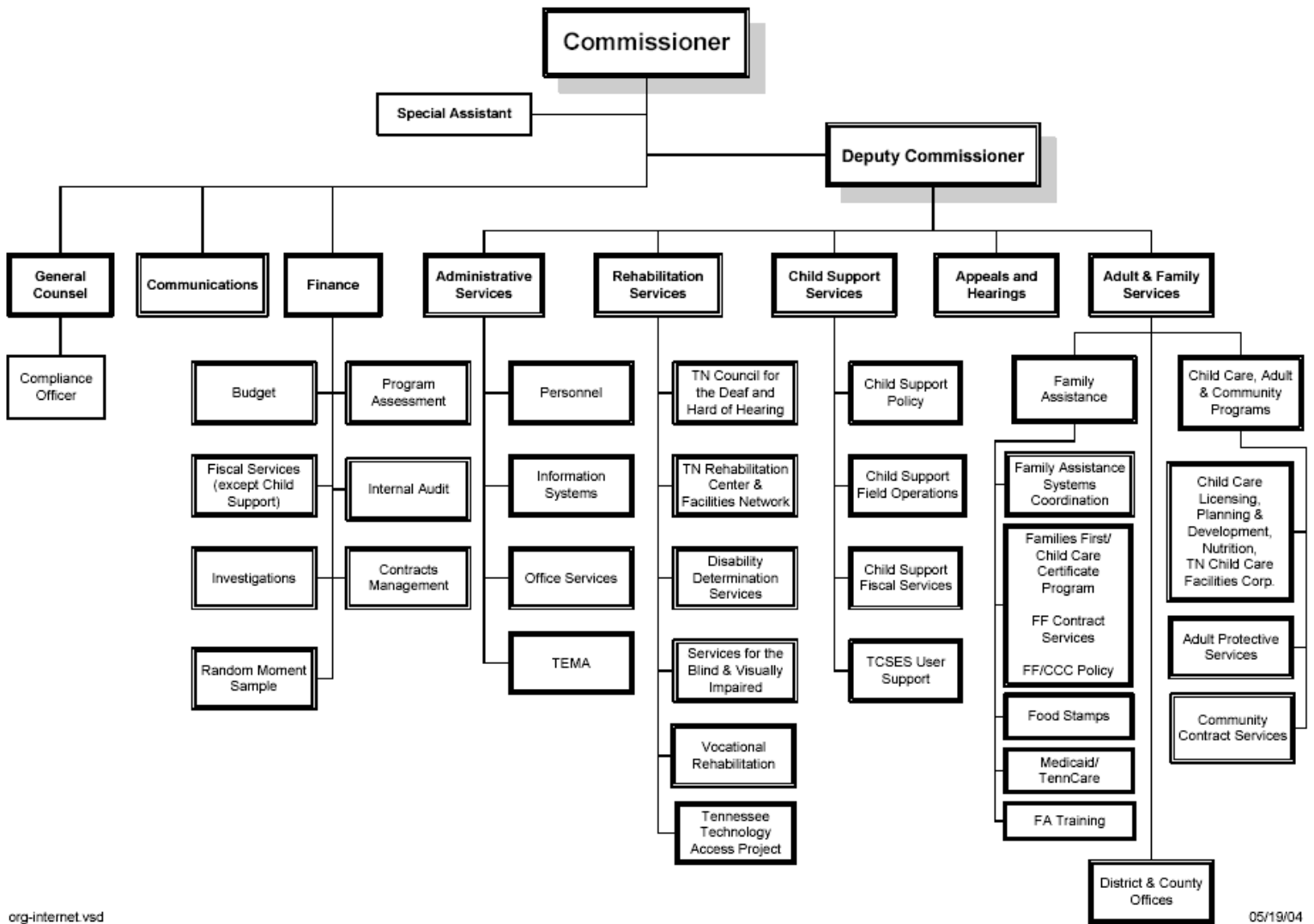
Such duties may include:

- Ensuring all new employees receive Title VI training during staff orientation;
- Conducting annual In-Service training for all employees;
- Ensuring procedures are in place to inform clients of their rights under Title VI;
- Displaying and distributing Title VI posters and brochures;
- Conducting internal monitoring activities to ensure staff compliance with Title VI;
- Maintaining complaint log and conducting investigations when necessary;
- Submission of the annual Title VI Compliance Plan report and other required documents to the Department of Human Services in a timely manner; and
- Other duties as necessary to ensure agency compliance with the Title VI regulation.

# Appendix D

## DHS Organizational Chart

# Department of Human Services



org-internet.vsd

05/19/04

# Appendix E

## STEPS Case Staffing Information



## **APPENDIX E**

### **S.T.E.P.S. CASE STAFFING FORMS**

The following forms are available through the Groupwise Default Library. If you do not have access, contact your DHS Area Manager or DHS District Office:

STEPS Staffing Notice  
STEPS PRP Renegotiation Notice  
STEPS Monthly Reminder Notice  
STEPS Coordinator Initial Report to Caseworker  
STEPS Coordinator Monthly Follow-Up Report to Caseworker  
ECS Monthly Follow-Up Report to Caseworker  
STEPS Staffing Form Part I  
STEPS Staffing Form Part II  
STEPS Work Component History  
STEPS Action Plan

### **STEPS STAFFING GUIDELINES**

A staffing session at the 54<sup>th</sup> month is conducted to allow our customer the opportunity to meet with the Families First staff and providers who are actively working with him/her on the road to self-sufficiency. When our customer has six months remaining in the time count, it is imperative that all agencies working with that customer collaborate on an intensive case management approach. More intensive case management procedures are mandatory with the 54<sup>th</sup> month of the lifetime count and are optional beginning with the 16<sup>th</sup> month of the time count. By including the customer in the staffing session, the customer has the opportunity to discuss the situation with the FF staff and agency representatives simultaneously. The FF staff and service providers will share information with the customer about what resources are available to assist the customer in gaining adequate employment.

The end result of the staffing will be an Action Plan and a PRP that will facilitate the customer's efforts to get the best job possible in the six months remaining in the lifetime limit. The PRP renegotiation must include the component changes required by policy. The Action Plan for Families First and provider staff is on Part II of the Staffing Form. There is also an Action Plan on a separate page to be completed by the customer during the staffing session.

The STEPS Coordinator will make every attempt to meet with the customer prior to the staffing in order to:

- Establish a relationship,
- Gather preliminary information, and
- Explore the customer's needs and goals as related to gainful employment.

The STEPS Coordinator for the district will facilitate the staffing. The caseworker will present the case to the group by reviewing the information contained on Part I

Part I (completed prior to the staffing):

Part I of the STEPS Staffing form is to be completed by the county. The caseworker will have ultimate responsibility for this information although the CMA may assist in completing the form. The caseworker will also take responsibility for scheduling the staffing session, taking into consideration the varying schedules of all invited attendees.

It is mandatory that the caseworker, Employment Career Specialist, and the STEPS Coordinator be present at the staffing. The staffing will be a scheduling priority for mandatory attendees. When scheduling the staffing session, clearly indicate that it is a STEPS staffing.

Forward Part I to each of the attendees. The attendees should review Part I and bring any pertinent information to the staffing session.

Forward Part I to the STEPS Coordinator via GroupWise or fax at least five days prior to the scheduled staffing session. This will serve as a referral form to the STEPS Coordinator.

The STEPS Coordinator will use this information when meeting with the customer prior to the staffing session.

Part II

Complete Part II of the form at the time of the staffing using the customer's input. The Action Plan on Part II must coincide with the customer's Action Plan, which is completed on the separate form provided.

If the customer does not attend the staffing session, the caseworker must contact the customer if PRP renegotiation is required.

**FAMILIES FIRST WORK EXPERIENCE WORKSITE AGREEMENT  
BETWEEN  
THE TENNESSEE DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES  
AND**

---

**(SPONSOR)**

\_\_\_\_\_, A Government or private non-profit agency (hereinafter referred to as sponsor), enters into a non-financial agreement with the Tennessee Department of Human Services (TDHS) to participate in the Families First work of Human Services (TDHS) to participate in the Families First work experience program as worksite sponsor to provide work experience for \_\_\_\_\_, a Families First participant.

**TDHS AGREES:**

1. To provide supportive services as appropriate to enable individuals to participate in a work experience assignment.
2. To refer employable trainees to the worksite.
3. To furnish any required reporting forms.
4. To notify the worksite of changes affecting the hours of work assigned.
5. To monitor participants assigned to the worksite.

**SPONSOR AGREES:**

1. To provide an actual work experience where trainees can gain job experience and skills in the following area: \_\_\_\_\_
2. Not to displace any paid employees or fill any existing funded unfilled position with participants.
3. To provide all routine supplies and equipment trainees need in the performance of work assignments.
4. To provide supervision and training as appropriate to the participant's assignment.
5. To complete an attendance and evaluation form on each participant's assignment.
6. To give equal employment consideration to qualified trainees when paid positions become available.
7. To provide for the health and safety of the trainees while performing on the worksite including an injury claim process.
8. Not to use participants to fill vacancies created by a strike, lockout, or other bonafide labor dispute or action.
9. Not to involve participants in any political or bipartisan activity.
10. To notify the TDHS Area Manager of any accidents involving participants.
11. Not to discriminate against and participant on the basis of Race, Color, Religion, Sex, Age, National Origin, or Handicap.
12. To maintain the confidentiality of all information provided about clients receiving services under this agreement.

This agreement does not provide reimbursement for any expenses incurred by the sponsor for providing work experience and supervision to participants.

This agreement may be terminated at any time by mutual agreement of TDHS or \_\_\_\_\_

This agreement is effective as of the \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 20 \_\_\_\_\_, and shall remain in effect until such time as it is amended or terminated by mutual agreement, or by independent action of either TDHS or \_\_\_\_\_ .

-----  
AREA MANAGER

-----  
EMPLOYER

-----  
COUNTY

-----  
ADDRESS

-----  
PHONE NO.

-----  
PHONE NO.

DISTRIBUTION: ORIGINAL TO SPONSOR  
COPY TO DHS

# Appendix F

## Locating Approved Training Courses & Determining a Demand Occupation

## **LOCATING APPROVED TRAINING COURSES IN YOUR AREA**

Access the TN Department of Labor and Workforce Development site by entering [www.state.tn.us/labor-wfd](http://www.state.tn.us/labor-wfd).

Once at the site, follow these steps:

- From the menu on the left, select Services for Job Seekers.
- From the Job Seekers & Workers topic list, select “Employment and Training”.
- Scroll to the end of the article and click on “Workforce Training – WIA”.
- Scroll to the end of the article and click on “Statewide List”.
- Choose your LWIA area.
- Choose the training institution and click on the name.
- As you scroll down, you will see the approved training courses listed.

## **DETERMINING DEMAND OCCUPATIONS IN YOUR AREA**

Demand occupations are defined by the TN Department of Labor and Workforce Development. To learn whether an occupation is considered to be a “demand occupation” in your area, consult the DOLWD website. In order to do this, access the site by entering [www.state.tn.us/labor-wfd](http://www.state.tn.us/labor-wfd).

Once at the site, follow these steps:

- From the menu on the left, select Services for Job Seekers.
- From the Job Seekers & Workers topic list, select “Labor Market Information”.
- Click on THE SOURCE highlighted mid-page.
- Click on the Inquiry block.
- From the menu on the left, click on Occupations.
- Choose the icon titled Labor Supply and Demand and click.
- Choose the LWIA map.
- Choose your LWIA area.
- Choose the category of occupations you are interested in, or enter the title of an exact occupation and choose “Begin Search”.
- You will receive a response which indicates whether the Growth Rate is negative or positive. A positive result indicates this is a demand occupation.

For example, to check whether “hairdresser” is a demand occupation in your LWIA area:

- Follow the above directions through choosing your LWIA area on the map.
- At this point, you may:
  - Ask for all occupations at the first field and then choose “Commercial and Personal Services” from the list. From the next list, choose “Barbering and Cosmetology Services”.
  - Review the response which indicates whether the Growth Rate is negative or positive for your area.

# Appendix G

## Computer Access



## **SUBJECT: ACCESS TO COMPUTER RESOURCES FOR CONTRACT STAFF**

All requests related to computer access for Families First Contract staff must be processed through the Family Assistance Systems Coordination Unit. The following is a summary of the procedures:

- All Families First Contract Agencies must have an Agency Security Registration Document, (HS-2744), completed and on file with Central Office Security Administration (COSA). The Agency Security Registration Document identifies the five character Security Identifier assigned to a contract agency. No request for a User ID can be initiated if a contract agency is not registered. Contact person reference the Agency Security Registration is Gene Henderson, telephone (615) 313-5533 or e-mail [Gene.Henderson@state.tn.us](mailto:Gene.Henderson@state.tn.us).
- All contract staff needing/having computer access should be initiated and terminated by the Area Managers.
- All new User ID's that are assigned to Families First contract staff will now begin with the five character Security Identifier that is assigned to the agency (e.g., TN038, TN051, TN151, etc.). The 'TND' and 'TNF' codes will no longer be used to assign User ID's.
- User ID's that currently begin with 'TND' or 'TNF' will be changed after implementation of the Security Administration Facility for Everyone (SAFE) system. SAFE is a new automated security system to obtain a User ID allowing access to Department of Human Services (DHS) computer resources.

### **OBTAINING ACCESS**

The assignment of a *user identification* (User ID) code is the first step in getting an individual access to State-owned computer systems and resources. Form [HS-2730 \(User ID Application/Access Authorization\)](#) is used to initiate access for Families First contract staff.

- 1) The appropriate Area Manager must complete form HS-2730.
- 2) Complete all appropriate fields in Section A.
- 3) Ensure that the contract JOB TITLE is entered.
- 4) Ensure that the five-character agency **SECURITY IDENTIFIER** and agency **NAME** are entered in Section C if the appropriate choice is not in the drop-down list for **AGENCY IDENTIFIER**.
- 5) Complete Section B2. Access rights that will be authorized have been tentatively pre-defined based on the individual's contract Job Title listed above.
- 6) In the Comments: provide the name of the employing agency and location/address of the USER.
- 7) Send completed forms by e-mail to ([Gene.Henderson@state.tn.us](mailto:Gene.Henderson@state.tn.us))

Notification will be returned to the manager who sent the request after all authorized access rights have been granted, or the request has been denied. Incomplete forms will be returned for correction before they are processed.

## **TRAINING FOR END-USERS**

Every individual who is assigned a User ID and given access rights to State computer resources must complete the End-User Security Awareness training, and sign form [HS-2724](#) (*User Responsibilities & Agreements Confirmation Document*).

All Families First contract staff must be trained. Training should take place at the appropriate local DHS office. Form HS-2724 must be received by the Central Office Security Administration (COSA) unit no later than ten (10) working days after the User ID is assigned. Training should be scheduled through the appropriate DHS District Administrator, or Area Manager.

## **TERMINATING ACCESS**

The office of the Director, Family Assistance Systems Coordination must be notified immediately after a contract staff member leaves employment, or no longer requires the assignment of a User ID. The Form HS-2730 will need to be completed, requesting Delete/Reduce Access Rights, and e-mailed to: ([Gene.Henderson@state.tn.us](mailto:Gene.Henderson@state.tn.us)).

## **ATTACHMENTS:**

USER ID APPLICATION/ACCESS AUTHORIZATION FORM HS-2730

TENNESSE DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES USER SECURITY AGREEMENT  
& RESPONSIBILITY CONFIRMATION Form HS-2724

# Appendix H

## Component Referral Forms



**DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES  
FAMILIES FIRST  
Work Component Provider Referral**

**ENTER TOTAL  
NUMBER OF  
ACTUAL  
MONTHS ON  
FAMILIES FIRST**

\_\_\_\_\_

Participant Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Case/Cat/Seq #: \_\_\_\_\_ Social Security #: \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_

Head of AG: \_\_\_\_\_ Social Security #: \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_

Participant Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ TN ZIP Code \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: ( ) - \_\_\_\_\_

**Dear Participant: You have agreed to participate in these services as a part of your Personal Responsibility Plan. This form tells you what services are being provided for you and to which office you should report. If you do not participate without a good reason as determined by your caseworker, your money payment will be stopped. You must report these services by the dates listed below.**

- ☐ Work Prep ☐ Adult Education ☐ TABE  
☐ Employment Career Services ☐ Training ☐ Other \_\_\_\_\_  
☐ Special Accommodations needed: \_\_\_\_\_

1. Agency/Office: \_\_\_\_\_ Report On: \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Time to Report: \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone: ( ) - \_\_\_\_\_ # of Hours: \_\_\_\_\_

2. Agency/Office: \_\_\_\_\_ Report By: \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Time to Report: \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone: ( ) - \_\_\_\_\_ # of Hours: \_\_\_\_\_

<b>Service Authorization By:</b> _____	<b>Referral Date:</b> _____ - _____
Caseworker and/or Case Management Assistant: _____	
Office Phone: ( ) - _____	Office FAX: ( ) - _____
Address: _____ TN ZIP: _____	

¿Habla español? 1-888-863-6178



**FAMILIES FIRST**  
**DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES**  
**Supportive Services Referral**

Participant Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Case/Cat/Seq#: \_\_\_\_\_ Social Security #: \_\_\_\_\_

Head of AG: \_\_\_\_\_ Social Security #: \_\_\_\_\_

Participant Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP CODE: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

**Dear Participant: You have agreed to receive these services to assist you in your *Personal Responsibility Plan*. This form tells you what services are being provided to you. Remember, if you do not participate without a good reason as determined by your caseworker, then your money payment will be stopped. If there are changes in your service needs, you must report these to your DHS Caseworker.**

☐ Transportation      ☐ Reimbursement      ☐ Bus Pass      ☐ Van Service  
☐ Stop Transportation effective \_\_\_\_\_  
☐ Automobile Repair      Make \_\_\_\_\_ Model \_\_\_\_\_ Year \_\_\_\_\_ Value \_\_\_\_\_  
☐ Vehicle Related Expenses      ☐ Dental Assistance      ☐ Optical Assistance  
☐ Work Related Support Services      ☐ State Office Approved Services  
☐ Special Accommodations needed: \_\_\_\_\_

**1. Agency/Office:** \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Service: \_\_\_\_\_

**2. Agency/Office:** \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Service: \_\_\_\_\_

**Service Authorization By:**

**Referral Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

Caseworker and/or

Case Management Assistant: \_\_\_\_\_

Office Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Office FAX: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_

Supervisor (if required): \_\_\_\_\_ District Office: \_\_\_\_\_

**¿Habla español? 1-888-863-6178**

# Appendix I

## Employment Verification Form



## **EMPLOYMENT VERIFICATION**

### **A. Employment Information**

1. Employer: \_\_\_\_\_
2. Employer Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. Employee Name: \_\_\_\_\_
4. Employment Start Date: \_\_\_\_\_
5. Full Time Employment ☐ Part Time Employment ☐
6. Rate of Pay: Hourly/Salary: \_\_\_\_\_
7. Number of Hours Worked per Week: \_\_\_\_\_
8. How Often Paid: Weekly ☐ Bi-Monthly ☐ Monthly ☐
9. Benefits: Yes ☐ No ☐

### **B. Information about Group Health Insurance**

1. Does s/he have health insurance as an employee? Yes ☐ No ☐
  - a) If Yes, Name of Carrier: \_\_\_\_\_  
Policy #: \_\_\_\_\_  
Effective Date: \_\_\_\_\_
  - b) Types of Coverage (please check all that apply):  
☐ Hospital ☐ Medical ☐ Dental ☐ Drugs  
☐ Vision ☐ Ambulance ☐ Home Health
  - c) If NO, does s/he have access to group health insurance as an employee: ☐ Yes ☐ No  
If YES, can s/he apply for health insurance coverage at any time? ☐ Yes ☐ No  
When is the next date s/he can enroll? Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
If NO, why does this employee NOT have access to group health insurance?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

2. Does s/he have family coverage? ☐ Yes ☐ No
  - a) Is family coverage available to this employee? ☐ Yes ☐ No
  - b) Can s/he apply for family coverage at any time? ☐ Yes ☐ No
  - c) If NO, when is the next date this employee can get family coverage: Date: \_\_\_\_\_

3. This family member(s) is not covered under family coverage due to a medical condition:

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End Date (if applicable) \_\_\_\_\_

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

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Employer's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Thank you for your time and consideration in completing this request.

Please return to:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Organization: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

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# Appendix J

## Code of Ethics Form

**FAMILIES FIRST CONTRACT AGENCIES**  
**CODE OF ETHICS AND STANDARDS OF CONDUCT**

The Tennessee Department of Human Services (DHS) is responsible for protecting and improving the quality of life of many of Tennessee's most vulnerable citizens. To assist in meeting these responsibilities, DHS contracts with other public and not-for-profit agencies to form an effective team of experts to deliver the necessary services. Employees of agencies who contract with DHS have an obligation to act in the public's best interest at all times.

**Professional and Employment Practices**

In keeping with the state's policy of non-discrimination, DHS does not discriminate on the basis of race, sex, religion, color, national or ethnic origin, age, disability, or military service in its policies, programs, services, or activities. No one will be denied access, admission, treatment, or employment in its programs, services, or activities. Consistent with this policy, it is also the intention of DHS to provide a work environment for contract employees free of sexual harassment.

**Accepting Gifts**

DHS contract employees may not solicit or accept, directly or indirectly, gifts, gratuities, favors, loans, meals or drinks, entertainment tickets or passes, unusual discounts, or any other thing of value from: clients or customers; lobbyists or the employer of lobbyists; firms or representatives of firms doing or seeking business with DHS. Likewise, DHS contract agencies are expected to adhere to these same regulations in their contractual relationship with DHS employees.

**Property and Service**

Contract employees have a duty and obligation to conserve, preserve, and protect state property, equipment, and supplies. Contract employees must not directly or indirectly use or allow the use of state property, facilities, or services of any kind (including those leased to or paid for by DHS or the state) for other than officially approved activities. .

**Use, Protection and Release of Information**

Names or other confidential information about persons or organizations that may be available to DHS contract agencies may not be released to any person or organization if such information is not to be released to the public pursuant to the law and DHS policies.

**Computer Systems**

All contract employees adhere to policies, procedures and other standards established by DHS to maintain the security of its automated and manual systems and administrative processes and those of outside systems to which DHS has access. Specifically, all information maintained within state computer files (ACCENT, Clearinghouse, etc.) is confidential. Contract employees sharing their "user IDs" and/or passwords with other individuals will be held responsible for any fraudulent action executed with the "user ID".

**Documentation and Communication**

DHS contract employees, through the course of performing their job responsibilities, may become aware of circumstances in which the abuse and/or neglect of children or adults has occurred or is suspected. Like any citizen, contract employees have a legal responsibility to report such instances of abuse/neglect to the appropriate agency or authority and are subject to the same legal liabilities for failure to report.

**Consequences of Non-Compliance**

Failure to comply with these policies, standards, and guidelines, and any others which may be specific to the contract employees' organizational unit may subject the contract employee to disciplinary action in accordance with the contract agency's rules and regulations and/or a request from DHS for termination of the employee from the contract position. Action could include termination, referral for criminal prosecution, and reimbursement to DHS for any losses or damages resulting from the violation.

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Employee's Signature

Date